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WITH GOD IN THE WORLD

WITH GOD
IN THE WORLD

A Series of Papers

BY

CHARLES H. BRENT
OF ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH
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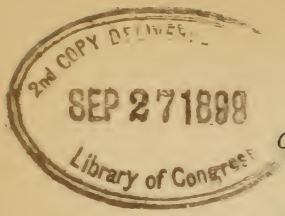

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TO MY FRIENDS

JOHN W. WOOD, SILAS McBEE

AND

JAMES L. HOUGHTELING

Preface

CHARLES DARWIN *says somewhere that "the only object in writing a book is a proof of earnestness." Whether it is the* only *object, may be a question; it is certainly* one *object. And the poorest book that ever went to press, merits respect, provided that its writer is sincere and speaks from conviction. It is this and the sense that "thought is not our own until we impart it" to others, that has encouraged me to write these pages —originally a series of papers prepared for the* Saint Andrew's Cross, *the organ of a Society for which I am glad to profess publicly a deep admiration and affection. Often, more frequently far than is noted, I have borrowed the thought and language of others to express my own mind. I send out this little volume with the hope that, before it meets with the fate of the ephemeral literature to which it belongs, it may help a few here and there to take up life's journey with steadier steps and cheerier mien.*

C. H. B.

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Chapter I

The Universal Art

IT is productive of much mischief to try to make people believe that the life of prayer is easy. In reality there is nothing quite so difficult as strong prayer, nothing so worthy of the attention and the exercise of all the fine parts of a great manhood. On the other hand there is no man who is not equal to the task. So splendid has this human nature of ours become through the Incarnation that it can bear any strain and meet any demand that God sees fit to put upon it. Some duties are individual and special, and there is exemption from them for the many, but there is never any absolution from a duty for which a man has a capacity. There is one universal society, the Church, for which all are eligible and with which all are bound to unite; there is one universal book, the Bible, which all can understand and which it is the duty of all to read; there is one universal art, prayer, in which all may become well skilled and

to the acquirement of which all must bend their energies.

Active or dormant, the instinct of prayer abides, a faithful tenant, in every soul. The peasants who went to the Incarnate One and said "Lord, teach us to pray," were representative of a whole race, a race which feels stirring within its breast a capacity for prayer, but whose power to pray falls far short of the desire. The instinct to pray may be undeveloped, or paralyzed by violence, or it may lie bed-ridden in the soul through long neglect; but even so, no benumbed faculty is more readily roused to life and nerved to action than that of prayer. The faculty is there; no one is without it. Whether it expands, and how, is only a question of the will of the person concerned.

It is good to be quite honest and frank. Is it not so that the real thing that makes men dumb towards God is, in the first instance, at any rate, not intellectual doubt about the efficacy of prayer but the difficulty of it all—the rebellion of the flesh, the strain upon the attention, the claim upon the time? Are not the common stumbling-blocks in the way of prayer incidental rather than essential? Do men give up prayer because they are conscientiously convinced that they would do violence to

their noble nature if they were to persist in its exercise? Nothing can release a man from the duty of praying but the profound conviction that it would be a sin for him to continue to pray. And it might be safely added that any one thus momentarily caught in the toils of pure reason, any one endowed with such a delicate conscience as would lead to this, must eventually turn again with joy to the neglected task. Even the great agnostic scientist, Tyndall, who, of course, had a very limited view of what prayer was capable of accomplishing, and was in a position to perceive only one dim ray of its beauty — its subjective refining influence upon the petitioner — even such an one declares that "prayer in its purer forms hints at disciplines which few of us can neglect without loss."*

How to perfect the talent of prayer — that is the question. Bent upon this errand many wind themselves in the folds of complicated rules or bathe themselves in the vapour of fascinating theories, all to no purpose. Or, as in the case of most things worth coveting, they cast around for some easy way of attainment, only to experience that where they "looked for crowns to fall," they "find the

* *On Prayer as a Form of Physical Energy.*

tug 's to come,—that 's all." Simplicity and courage are two virtues indispensable for those who covet to pray well. Especially must they be ready to embrace difficulty and court pain—and that through the long stretch of a life-time.

Let no man think that sudden in a minute
All is accomplished and the work is done;—
Though with thine earliest dawn thou shouldst begin it
Scarce were it ended in thy setting sun.

Let it be clearly understood at the outset, then, that though the art of prayer is a universal art it is the most difficult of all. But even so this is not an excuse for discouragement or a justification of spiritual indolence, for a man's best desires are always the index and measure of his possibilities; and the most difficult duty that a man is capable of doing is the duty that above all he should do. A moment's reflection must convince us that man cannot teach man to pray, because of what prayer is. Prayer is man's side of converse with God; it is speech Godward. How passing absurd it would be for a third person to presume to instruct either one of two companions how to hold converse with his friend! Were he to venture the impertinence he would develop in his pupil the curse of self-con-

sciousness — that is all. We can learn to converse with men only by conversing; we can learn to pray to God only by praying. Prayer is a universal art, but there is only one Teacher for all, and He never teaches two persons in exactly the same way. God's friendships are as diverse as the souls with whom He interchanges confidences. These confidences must come from Himself; none else can impart them. There are certain great truths about prayer which may be formulated to good purpose — fundamental laws governing all fellowship with God, laws to which all in common must give heed; but beyond this one may not venture. In the matter of prayer as in all else God reserves to Himself the exclusive right of imparting His most intimate secrets directly to each separate soul, having a separate confidence for each according to its capacity, temperament, and all those qualities which distinguish every man from every other man.

Though we may have learned the fundamental principles of prayer from devout friends and teachers, whatever we really know of prayer we have learned by praying. Even the mother, at whose knee the earliest phrases of prayer were lisped out, at the best only led us gently into the presence of God. It is not too much to say that the Church

herself cannot do more than put the soul very near God and leave it there, trusting that something will come of it. The rest must proceed in direct course from the lips of the Most High Himself. So delicate and subtle is the correspondence between the soul and God, so "intensely personal" a thing is prayer* that we are often seriously hindered rather than helped by the blundering but well-intended efforts of those who would guide us to better devotion. Even to put a manual of private prayers into the hands of some persons who have not been accustomed to reach God through a book might be sufficient to mar the spontaneity of their approach to Him and check the intimate relations with Him which have hitherto always obtained. Because it suits one person's temperament to call in the aid of a manual it by no means follows that every one else should be presented with a copy of the book. Indeed happy are those souls who have always been able to speak with a reverent yet free familiarity with God, having nothing to aid save the vision of His face; and the final aim of every good manual is to emancipate the soul into the joyousness of a spontaneity which is wholly devoid of blighting self-consciousness.

* *Maturin.*

It ought to be further added that every one who regularly uses set forms of prayer should habitually incorporate into his devotions at least some words of his own which, however poor and few, yet are fresh and new from his heart. Of course what has been said about forms of prayer applies exclusively to private devotions. When the great corporate life of the Church speaks in worship it must be with one clear voice unmixed with the idiosyncrasies of the individual and summing up the aspirations of the best. But of this later.

The world just now is sadly in need of better service, but before this can be rendered there must be better prayer. A low standard of prayer means a low standard of character and a low standard of service. Those alone labour effectively among men who impetuously fling themselves upward towards God. In view of this it is a comfort to feel that no earnest man, whatever be the stage of his spiritual development, can be satisfied with his present attainments in his life of prayer. Fortunately for us, here as well as in other departments of life the ideal is always pressing itself upon our notice and making the actual blush with shame for what it is. And it is just because this is so that there is hope of better things. The ideal beckons as well as

condemns. What if long steeps of toil, strewn with the stones of difficulty, lie in between! God's home is far up on the hills, and nowhere is He so easily found as in a difficulty. As has been said, prayer is quite the most difficult task a man can undertake; but it has this gracious compensation that in no other duty does God lend such direct, face-to-face help. Man may speak wise words about prayer; the Church may bid to prayer; but God alone can unfold to souls the delicate secrets of prayer. The best help is for the hardest duty—the help that comes straight from the Lord.

Chapter ii

Friendship with God — Looking

YES, prayer is speech Godward, and worship is man's whole life of friendship with God, the flowing out, as it were, of all that tide of emotion and service which is love's best speech. It is by thinking, then, of the nature of fellowship between man and man, which is the most beautiful thing in the world excepting only fellowship with God, that we can get substantial help in developing the life of prayer. Consider the Christian fellowship of two noble characters. It is "the greatest love and the greatest usefulness, and the most open communication, and the noblest sufferings, and the most exemplar faithfulness, and the severest truth and the heartiest counsel, and the greatest union of minds," — Jeremy Taylor stops here only because he has exhausted his stock of sublime phrases — "of which brave men and women are capable."*

Friendship is a full, steady stream, not intermit-

* *Works: Vol. i.* 72.

tent or spasmodic. It is not something which lasts only when each looks into the other's eyes; for "distance sometimes endears friendship, and absence sweeteneth it." It moves and expands the life even when the mind is busied with matters prosaic and vexatious, even when there is no inward contemplation of the features or character of the absent friend. And yet, although friendship does not consist in face-to-face communication one with another, it is in this that it takes its rise, it is by this that it is fed. Fellowship is not the same as friendship, but there can be no friendship without fellowship. That is to say, there must be certain definite, formal acts, acts not made once for all, but repeated as often as opportunity is given; such form the cradle and nursery of friendship. In themselves they are not much — a grasp of the hand, a smile, a simple gift, a conventional salutation, a familiar talk about familiar things — but they introduce soul to soul, and through them each gives to the other his deepest self.

Friendship between man and man is no vague, intangible thing whose only reality is its name. Much less can one think thus of friendship with God. Friendship with God is the friendship of friendships. While it lives on strong and true even when

we are not in conscious fellowship with Him, moments of conscious realization and contemplation of His person, character and presence are as essential to friendship with Him as food is necessary for the sustenance of life. There must be times of prayer and occasions of definite, formal approach to Him, the more the better, provided they be healthy and free. It is not an arbitrary enactment that declares morning, noonday and evening to be the moments of time when the soul of man should with peculiar intensity lift up its gaze unto the hills.* One recognizes immediately the inherent fitness of having conscious fellowship with God at the opening, in the middle and at the close of day. In the morning,—because man's powers are then replete with life, his will nerved to act, his eye clear to see; never is he so well able to gain a vision of God, whether in the solitude of his room or in the quiet of the Church at an early Eucharist, as in the first hours of a new day. At noon,—because the soul like the body needs a mid-day rest; the dust of activity and the distractions of business will have dimmed the morning vision before the day is full gone, and it is good to refresh the nature by again, if it be only for a brief mo-

* *Ps. lv:* 17.

ment, looking straight up into the face of the Most High. At night,—for the evening shadows find God's servant with soiled soul and drooping aspirations in sore need of that cleansing and cheer which the sight of God imparts.

And the life of prayer works in a circle. The devotions of the morning give tone to those which come at noon and night, while the night prayers in turn determine the quality of the morrow's. Men usually wake in the temper of mind in which they went to sleep. It is all-important to gain a clear vision of God as the last conscious act before going to rest. The founder of French socialism was awakened every morning by a valet who said: "Remember, Monsieur le Comte, that you have great things to do." But it is not men who aspire only or chiefly in the morning that achieve great things, but rather those who aspire at night. What is of nature in the morning is of grace at night. The vision that comes easily at the beginning of the unused stretch of a new day is harder to see when disappointment and failure have clouded the eye of hope; but it means more. The men who attain the highlands of the spiritual life never "sleep with the wings of aspiration furled."

Of course God is always with us, always looking

at us with searching yet loving scrutiny. It would be impossible for us to be more completely in His presence than we are; for in Him "we live, and move, and have our being." But for the most part our lives are spent without much conscious recognition of the fact. He will be no more present at the last day when we stand before His throne than He is now. The only difference will be that then we shall see Him as He sees us; we shall be so wholly absorbed by that consciousness that there will be room for no other consideration as, God grant, there will be no other desire. But before that moment comes men must practise looking into His face by faith so that it will not be unfamiliar as the face of a stranger when the last veil is swept aside.

Among men contemplation of another's personality is the requisite preliminary of fellowship with him. Fellowship can begin only when there is a mutual recognition each of his fellow's presence. Personality is the most powerful magnet the world knows; and the finer the personality the more readily will all one's best impulses be set in motion and attracted to it. How vain then is it to attempt to speak to God before the consciousness of His living, loving presence has caught the attention

and absorbed the mind — or at any rate until we have done our best to see Him, attentive, sympathetic, with His gaze fixed upon us. Power to pray is proportionate to the vividness of our consciousness of His presence and personality. When a man is talking to a companion his mind is occupied with the sense of the presence of an attentive, sympathetic personality rather than with the thought of the precise words he is going to use. His fellow acts as a magnet to extract his thoughts. An orator makes his finest appeal when he is least conscious of himself and most conscious of his audience. Just so then is it with speech Godward. The moment a man is assured that God's personality is present and that His ear is opened earthward, speech heavenward is a power and a joy, and only then. Many make prayer a fine intellectual exercise or a training school for the attention — this and nothing more. They strain their utmost, and doubtless they succeed well, to understand each sentence uttered and to speak it intelligently. Their minds are on what they are saying rather than on the Person to Whom they are saying it. They reap about the same benefit as they would if they recited attentively a scene from Shakespeare.

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills." The vi-

sion of God unseals the lips of man. Herein lies strength for conflict with the common enemy of the praying world known as wandering thoughts. Personality will enchain attention when the most interesting intellectual, moral and spiritual concerns will fail to attract. If the eye is fixed on God thought may roam where it will without irreverence, for every thought is then converted into a prayer. Some have found it a useful thing when their minds have wandered off from devotion and been snared by some good but irrelevant consideration, not to cast away the offending thought as the eyes are again lifted to the Divine Face, but to take it captive, carry it into the presence of God and weave it into a prayer before putting it aside and resuming the original topic. This is to lead captivity captive.

It is hard for those to see God's face who confine their contemplation of spiritual things to moments of formal devotion, who, while occupied with material things, do not explore what is beneath and beyond the visible, who do not strive to discern the moral and religious aspect of every phase of life. On the other hand the vision of God becomes increasingly clear to such as look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not

seen. These may be exceedingly practical people, people ever active in the commonplace duties of life, but their wont is to cast everything into the upward sweep of the Ascension of Jesus and everything is seen by them with the glow of heaven upon it. Of course they pray well.

After all "the sin of inattention" does not begin at the time of formal approach to God. It only makes itself peculiarly manifest then. If a person lives listlessly and does not put his full force into the ordinary duties of his life where the aids to attention are plenty, how can he expect to command his mind at those times when it is called upon to make a supreme act of attentiveness and see Him Who is invisible? A good man of our day * said of himself: "My greatest help in life has been the blessed habit of intensity. I go at what I am about as if there was nothing else in the world for the time being."

Here then are two obvious, simple and rational principles upon obedience to which hinges the ability to make one's own the growing vision of God — the habit of spiritualizing the commonplace and the habit of attention in work. Whoever equips himself with them has made the best possible pre-

* *Charles Kingsley.*

paration for approach to God. It is an indirect way of getting at things, it is true; but often the method that is most indirect is the most direct. It is certainly so in this case.

Of course in considering the subject of God's Being one cannot wholly avoid the difficult question of personality. It would be aside from our purpose, however, to discuss the matter philosophically. For all practical purposes there is ample and secure footing near at hand. When by faith we look toward God, it is not toward an immovable but beautiful statue we turn, not to an abstract quality or a tendency that makes for righteousness, but to One Who looks with responsive gaze, Who notes our desires, Who heeds our words, Who lives, Who loves, Who acts. It is a horrible and deadening travesty of the truth to conceive of God as a great, impassive Being, seated on a throne of majesty, drinking in all the life and worship that flow from the service of His myriad creatures, Himself receiving all and giving none. Though probably no one believes this as a matter of theory, when men look for God in the practice of prayer too often it is such a God they find. And many can say with Augustine as they review moments of fruitless devotional effort in the past: "My error was my

God." * The truth is that though a great tide of energy moves ceaselessly toward God, it is but the shadow of what comes from Him. Indeed He is the Source of the life which flows inward toward Him as much as of that which flows outward from Him. He is undying energy, with unerring purpose, moving swiftly and noiselessly among men, striving to burn eternal life into their lame, stained, meagre souls. He is the Father that goes out to meet the returning profligate, the Shepherd that follows the track of the wandering sheep. Man has never yet had to wait for Him. He has always been as close to man as man would let Him come. His hands have never ceased to beat upon the bars of man's self-will to force an entrance into starved human nature. All this must be in man's conception of God as he approaches Him.

What above all gives to God that which enables man to see Him is the Incarnation. In the Godhead is a familiar figure—the figure of Man. It was this that absorbed the attention of the dying Stephen. The Son of Man standing on God's right hand, was the vision that enthralled him as the stones battered out his life. And it is this same

* *For thou wert not thyself, but a mere phantom, and my error was my God. Confessions, Bk. iv. 7.*

vision that makes the unseen world a reality to men now. Humanity is there at its centre, the pledge of sympathy, the promise of victory. Not by a flight of imagination but by the exercise of insight we can look and see the sympathetic face of the Son of Man, who is also the Son of God; and with the sight fellowship with God becomes possible, the string of the tongue is loosed and we are ready to pray.

Chapter iii

Friendship with God—Speaking

QUITE a sufficient guide as to how God should be addressed is afforded by the Lord's Prayer. It was given by the Master in response to the earnest request of His disciples for instruction in prayer. Brief, compact and complete, it is as it were the Christian seed-prayer. Once let it be planted in the heart of a Church or the soul of a child of God and it will grow into the glowing devotion of wondrous collects and rich liturgies. Indeed there is no Christian prayer worth anything which does not owe its whole merit to the Lord's Prayer; and the noblest liturgy of the Church is but the expansion and application of the same. Hence it is the touchstone of all prayer. By it the Christian's mode of address to God is finally approved or condemned.

How important is it, then, that a man should know the Lord's Prayer!—know it, not merely as a formula, but as the embodiment of the vital prin-

ciples of converse with God. The process of yore must be repeated by the disciples of to-day. Like their predecessors of Galilee they must approach the unchangeable One and prefer the old entreaty: "Lord, teach us to pray." Nothing short of this will suffice. Then if they listen they will receive the familiar measures of the "Our Father" as a new and personal gift fresh and living from the lips of Jesus. It is good sometimes to "wait still upon God" between the sentences, and let the Holy Spirit apply each several petition to one's own special case and to all those interests which concern one's life—in sooth, translate it into the terms of our own day and generation. It is thus that the compressed richness of the Lord's Prayer is unfolded.

The Lord's Prayer is one of those most precious of things known as common property. But a common possession to be worth anything to anybody must be related by every one of the multitude who claim a share in it, each to his own personality. Before common property can fully justify its claim to be common, it must become in a sense private by a process of implicit appropriation on the part of the individuals concerned. So while the Lord's Prayer ideally belongs to every child of God as the common heritage of prayer, it actually belongs only to

those who have recognized and used it as a personal, though not exclusive, gift from its Author.

Not the least important characteristic of the Lord's Prayer is its simplicity in thought and expression. Surely it is not without significance that as it stands in the English tongue it is the purest piece of Saxon in literature, a monument of clearness and simplicity. God neither speaks or desires to be spoken to in grandiloquent language which belongs to the courts of earthly kings. The difficulty that so many persons find in praying without the aid of some form of devotion is largely due to the impression that the language needed for address to God is not such as an ordinary mortal can frame. There are four leading principles, the first of which contradicts this misconception, that stand out in bold prominence in the Lord's Prayer, and tell us what all speech Godward should be.

§ 1. *Prayer must be familiar yet reverent.* We are taught to address God as our Father. What a host of intimate confidences this single word calls up! There is no familiarity so close as that between child and father, no sympathy so sensitive. When Scripture declares that Enoch walked with God, whatever else it means beyond, it means at least that Enoch was able to hold familiar converse

with God in prayer. Those who knew him could find no better way of describing his relationship with God than by drawing the picture of the familiar companionship of two intimate friends. Or again, when Abraham is termed the friend of God it implies, as well as much beside, that he knew how to speak familiarly yet acceptably to God. All this was long ago, before man's full relation to God was made known. The coming of the Son of God as the Son of Man makes what was really deep seem shallow, so mighty was the change that was wrought. It is not merely as an ordinary friend that the Christian may speak to God, but as a son. Filial relations are the highest type of friendship. But familiarity must be chastened by reverence, a quality strangely lacking in our national character. It would seem as though in the boldness of our search for independence reverence had been largely forfeited. The Father addressed is in heaven. That is He is where holiness prevails to the utter exclusion of sin. So while we may tell out the whole mind it must be done with regard for the moral character of God and His eternal and infinite attributes; with the familiarity, not of equals, but of lowly souls addressing sympathetic greatness and holiness. To dwell exclusively on either one

of these two considerations, God's Fatherhood or His infinite character, will result, on the one hand, in familiarity without reverence; or, on the other, in reverence without familiarity. Familiarity without the discipline of reverence is desecrating impertinence, and reverence without the warmth of familiarity is chilling formalism.

§ 2. *Prayer should be comprehensive yet definite.* In the Lord's Prayer each petition gathers into its grasp whole groups of desires, and all the petitions taken together give shelter under their hospitable shadow to every need and every aspiration that belong to human life. Great gifts are asked for — "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." In such requests we even claim things *for* God as well as *from* Him. The dignity of each several petition is marked. We are taught to expect royal gifts from our royal Father, gifts worthy of members of that royal family, the children of the Incarnation. The effect of the persistent use of these comprehensive petitions has filtered right through human experience and taught man to expect great things in all departments of life, in science, in invention, in literature. Man's best desires have become a true measure of his possibilities.

The prayer that is shaped after the great model

must not be timid or faltering, but bold and aspiring. It is a great mistake for one to be satisfied with praying for, say, purity instead of "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." That is to ask for the crumb from the rich man's table when the rich man is beseeching you to sit by his side and share all that he has. Let us pray for purity by all means, though not as if it were a flower that grew in a bed all by itself. We can get one Christian grace only by aiming at all.

No less marked than the comprehension is the definiteness of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer. Each is as clear cut as a crystal. There is no mistaking its meaning. Like the articles of the Creed they are all too simple to be vague, and they carry their meaning on their face. It is a common fault in prayer to be content with a certain comprehension that abjures definiteness. If the latter without the former can at the best make a character of but small stature, the former without the latter can make no character at all. Take the one matter of penitence. The mere admission of sinfulness, as in the prayer of the publican, is but the first moan of penitence. A riper penitence rises from the vague to the definite in declaring the sins, and not only the sinfulness, for which God's mercy is implored.

True comprehension implies detailed knowledge and minute accuracy.

§ 3. *Prayer should be social rather than individual in spirit. Our* Father; forgive *us*. The "our" and the "us" warn men never to think of themselves as units, or of religion as a private transaction between God and the individual. God regards each as a part *of*, and never apart *from*, the whole race, at the same time cherishing each part as though it were the whole. Consequently petitions for others ought to keep even pace with those for ourselves. A moment's reflection shows how true philosophically the social form of prayer is. So closely is the web of human life woven that what touches one touches two at least, unless a man be a hermit, when he is as good as dead. Even supposing one were to pray for a spiritual gift for himself alone and receive it, it would at once become the property of others in some measure at any rate. It is an inflexible law that the righteousness or the evil, as the case may be, which dwells in a man, becomes forthwith the righteousness or the evil of the society to which he belongs. It is only common sense then to pray "give us" and "forgive us" rather than "give me" and "forgive me."

Of course, this does not mean that "I" and "me"

should never occur in our private prayers. They must do so. But I am to love my neighbour as myself on my knees as well as in society. My neighbour is my other or second self to which I owe an equal duty of prayer with myself. To link "their" or "his" with "mine" on equal terms is really to say "our"; to ask for others separately what I have already claimed for myself is to be social rather than individual in prayer.

It would follow, then, that intercessory prayer is not a work of extraordinary merit but a necessary element of devotion. It is the simple recognition in worship of the fundamental law of human life that no man lives or dies alone. But intercession rises to sublime heights when it claims the privilege and the power for each child of God to gather up in his arms the whole family to which he belongs, and carry it with its multifold needs and its glorious possibilities into the presence of the common Father for blessing and protection. It is grand to feel that the Christian can lift, by the power of prayer, a myriad as easily as one, that he can hold in his grasp the whole Church as firmly as a single parish, and can bring down showers of blessing on an entire race as readily as the few drops needed for his own little plot.

§ 4. *Prayer must maintain proper proportions.* Spiritual needs are paramount, material are secondary. Out of seven petitions six bear upon the invisible foundations of life and the remaining one alone is concerned, directly at any rate, with things material. It is further remarkable that the latter is as modest as the former are bold. The soul needs the whole of God's eternal Kingdom where the body requires but bread for the day. The Lord's Prayer does not teach asceticism, but it certainly condemns luxury, and implies that the physical nature requires a minimum rather than a maximum of attention and care.

With the vision of God above and the Christian seed-prayer well planted in the soul, man can dare to hope that his speech Godward will not waste itself in hollow echoes, but will travel straight up to the throne of Grace and bring a speedy answer.

Chapter iv

Friendship with God — The Response

PROBABLY the greatest result of the life of prayer is an unconscious but steady growth into the knowledge of the mind of God and into conformity with His will; for after all prayer is not so much the means whereby God's will is bent to man's desires as it is that whereby man's will is bent to God's desires. While Jesus readily responded to the requests and inquiries of His disciples His great gift to them was Himself, His personality. He called His apostles that they "should be with Him." The all-important thing is not to live apart from God, but as far as possible to be consciously with Him. It must needs be that those who look much into His face will become like Him. Man reflects in himself his environment, especially if he surrenders himself unreservedly to its influence. In the case of God, "in Whom we live and move and have our being," the influence is not passive, but active in impressing its character

upon us. It is not as the white of the land of snow which coats its animals with its own colour; it is a Person. The complete vision of Christ will mean the complete transformation of man — "We shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." If there were no other conceivable result from prayer than just this, it would even so be wonderful. Certainly that which we treasure most in companionship with an earthly friend is not his counsel or service; it is the touch of his soul upon our own; it is the embrace of his whole being that wraps itself about our whole being. One may say then that the real end of prayer is not so much to get this or that single desire granted, as to put human life into full and joyful conformity with the will of God.

This thought, beautiful and true as it is, would be too intangible and too great a tax upon faith, unless man had some more or less definite and immediate recognition of his heavenward appeals. The Old Testament is a standing witness to God's consideration for human limitations and weakness. He sometimes gave man less than the best because of the latter's inability to receive the best, though He always gave as much as could be received, until at last He gave His Son. Now it is in this same

way that He deals with His children of to-day. At first the lesser gifts are sought for and given, but as spiritual life ripens what man craves most for and what God is most eager to grant is that the Father's will may be wholly worked out in His child. Trust so grows that there can be no such thing as disappointment regarding the way God treats our petitions.

Not Thy gifts I seek, O Lord;
Not Thy gifts but Thee.
What were all Thy boundless store
Without Thyself? What less or more?
Not Thy gifts but Thee.

This frame of mind, however, belongs to the to-morrow of most lives. For the present the lesser gifts are the best we are equal to. And it cannot be too often or too strongly said that God has direct answers to prayer for every soul that appeals to Him. But many fail to recognize the answer when it comes because of inattention. If God is to be heard when He speaks we must give heed. It is no less a duty to "wait still upon God" than it is to address Him in prayer. A one-sided conversation is not a conversation at all. Conversation requires an interchange of thought. He who is one

moment the speaker must the next become the listener, intent upon the words of his companion. The expectation of an answer to prayer is laid down as a condition of there being one.

§ 1. Oftentimes God's answer is in the shape of an action rather than a voice. When we entreat a friend to do something for us, speedy compliance is a sufficient response to the request. If we are certain of the person addressed no verbal assurance is required. The character of our friend is the guarantee that the petition will be heeded. When, therefore, God is petitioned to do, we must look for an action rather than listen for a voice.

There are some requests the answer to which returns with the speed of a flash of light, as, for instance, when we ask God to give us some Christian grace or disposition of heart. The giving comes with the asking.* A man may not be strong enough to retain the gift, but it actually becomes his before he rises from his knees. The rationalist will object to this, that such an answer to prayer is nothing more than the subjective effect of a given attitude of mind. Granted; but that makes it none the less the direct work of God. Secondary or scientific causes exhibit to the observer the method by which

* *St. Mark xi*: 24.

God fulfils His purposes. The stone falls to the ground according to the law of gravitation, but God is behind the law controlling it. The distinguishing feature of the Jewish mode of thought was the way in which it related all things to God's immediate activity. The Old Testament is the book of God's immanence. The present attitude of mind leads men to rest in all causes short of God, and even to forget the need of a Cause of causes. An earnest student of nature remarked upon leaving her microscope: "I have found a universe worthy of God." She at least felt that a revelation of secondary causes was, at the same time, a new revelation of the God of causes.

If it could be proved that all answers to prayer came according to the working of natural law, it would not eliminate God from the process, or have any sort of bearing upon the efficacy of prayer. All we know of God's method of work demonstrates His love of law; and it would be no surprise, but rather what we should expect, to find that all the unseen stretches of life are equally within the domain of His law and order.*

§ 2. But when occasion requires, the reply to speech Godward comes in the shape of a voice. In one sense

* *Cf. Liddon, Advent in St. Paul's, p.* 22.

God is always speaking; He is never still. Just as in prayer it is not we who momentarily catch His attention but He ours, so when we fail to hear His voice it is not because He is not speaking so much as that we are not listening. We may hear sounds, as a language with which we are not conversant, but be unable to interpret. Or perhaps we are in the position of one who sits in the summer evening when nature is instinct with music, — the chirping of insect life, the whispering wind, the good-night call of the birds, — deaf to the many voices, whereas a companion has ears for nothing else but what those voices say. The cause of the former's deafness is that his attention is wholly absorbed by other interests. We must recognize that all things are in God and that God is in all things, and we must learn to be very attentive, in order to hear God speaking in His ordinary tone without any special accent. Power to do this comes slowly and as the result of not separating prayer from the rest of life. A man must not stop listening any more than praying when he rises from his knees. No one questions the need of times of formal address to God, but few admit in any practical way the need of quiet waiting upon God, gazing into His face, feeling for His hand, listening for His voice. "I

will hearken what the Lord God will say concerning me." God has special confidences for each soul. Indeed, it would seem as though the deepest truths came only in moments of profound devotional silence and contemplation.

The written Word of God has special messages for the individual as well as a large general message for the entire Christian body. The devotional use of Holy Scripture is the means by which the soul reaches some of the most precious manifestations of God's will. By devotional use is meant such a study as has for its ultimate purpose an act of worship, or of conscious fellowship with Him. The Bible reveals not merely what God was, but what He is. Finding from its pages how He loved, we know how He loves; learning how He dealt with or spoke to men, we perceive how He deals with and speaks to us. But our instruction in things divine must come to us from a Person rather than a book, though *through* a book perhaps. If we approach the Bible as we would approach Bacon or Milton, merely as a collection of the wise thoughts and actions of the dead, it will never sway the life to any large extent. Holy Scripture is separated from all other literature by the fact that it contains absolute spiritual truth and because its Author, as a liv-

ing Person, always stands behind it. Those who listen will hear the Holy Spirit saying to them, in direct application, the same things that lie on the open pages as the record of what was once said to men of old. Meditation or the devotional use of Scripture renders conscience, that organ of the soul by which God's voice is received by man, increasingly sensitive. The Old Testament days were full of men who could say "Thus saith the Lord," with the same assurance that they could report the speech of a comrade. Doubtless God had many ways of speaking to the prophets, but whatever these ways were and however special and singular, they were based originally on those by means of which He addresses all men in common. As a result of the Incarnation "all the Lord's people are prophets" and the Lord has "put His Spirit upon them;" and they, too, ought to be able to say "Thus saith the Lord."

§ 3. A third way in which God makes His will known to man is by His silences, silences which are always eloquent. As experience has taught us, silence can convey a message just as readily as speech sometimes, or even more readily. The silence of the Easter tomb was the first voice that told of the Resurrection. The loved disciple read

the message of the orderly silence of the place where the Lord had lain; "he saw and believed." Silence has expression and accent telling of sympathy, rebuke, anger, grief, as occasion may require. The silence of Jesus before the importunate appeal of the woman of Canaan, was full of sympathy and encouraged her faith to rise to sublime heights. Whereas His silence before the accusations of His enemies during His trial was so eloquent as to establish His innocence even in the eyes of a Pontius Pilate. And if God is silent now at times when we long for some sign from Him, it is because by means of silence He can best make known to us His mind. His silence may mean that our request is so foreign to His will, that it may not be heeded without hurt to the petitioner. Or, on the other hand, He may be luring on our faith and inciting it to a more ambitious flight. Or, again, it may be that His silence is His way of telling us that the answer to our query or petition lies in ourselves. God never tells man what man can find out for himself, as He never does what man can do for himself. The result of giving a person what he should earn is pauperism. As God will do, nay, can do, only what will enrich human nature, it would be a contradiction of Himself to

answer what we can find out for ourselves, or give what we can gain by our own efforts. Love lies within God's silences as their explanation.* The mother refuses to answer her child's questions because the child by a little observation and thought can itself get at the truth, and truth won by struggle is the only truth that we really possess. If God is silent when we ask for new knowledge of His Person and His love, may it not be that it is because we are substituting books about the Bible for an earnest study of the Bible itself, which contains a full answer to our prayer? Or if, when day after day we have prayed for the conversion of a relative, no response comes, may it not be that we have never put ourselves at the disposal of God to be the instrument for working out what is at once our desire and His purpose? At any rate, whatever be the explanation of a silence in this or that special instance, God is never silent excepting when silence speaks more clearly than a voice.

So the sure response comes to speech Godward in

* *I suppose that a constant* vision *of God would be an injury to almost all men,—that there are periods when even utter scepticism is the sign of God's mercy, and the necessary condition of moral restoration.—R. H. Hutton, Theological Essays, p.* 7.

an action, or a voice, or a speaking silence. The persevering, faithful, attentive soul will never fail to discern God's answer to prayer, nor be disappointed in the quality of that answer when it comes. God is more ready to hear than we to pray, and it is His wont to give more than either we desire or deserve.*

* *Collect for Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.*

Chapter v

The Testing of Friendship

OF course, friendship with God must be tried. Not only can true friendship stand any strain to which it may be put, but it even needs to be thus tested in order to be solidly set. It is like the knot that becomes more fixed and firm at each new pull of the cord. The faith and affection which will cling to a friend when all the forces of disunion seem combined to bring about a separation, are so tempered by the experience involved as to defy every conceivable enemy, and to discover new depths of love and service in the fellowship that has been thus put to the test. To enter upon just why this should be, is not to the purpose. It is a fact and law of the life of fellowship between man and man, and man and God. The force that threatens to break up the connection between God and man, but by means of which that union may be consummated, is temptation.

§ 1. *Temptation is always an opportunity.*—There

are two kinds of testing—that which proves a thing to discover whether it is what it professes to be, and that which aims to bring out latent possibilities in the thing tested. With the former there goes a sort of lurking suspicion that all may not be right, as when a bit of metal is tried by acid, or a big gun is proved by an excessive charge. When a test of this kind is over the thing that is tried is just what it was before, neither more nor less. No new quality is in the gift of the test. With the latter, on the other hand, the result is different, as when the silver "from the earth is tried, and purified seven times in the fire." The quartz goes into the furnace and a stream of unalloyed metal flows out; or to seek still another illustration,—the process by which steel is tempered. Here new qualities are given by means of the testing; to the silver, purity, and to the steel, hardness and elasticity. To this second form of testing belongs the element of trust rather than that of suspicion. The material is so good, that the workman has no doubt about its coming through the fire purer and more valuable than ever.

It is this kind of testing which the friends of God must undergo, the kind of testing which affords friends the very opportunity they need to become

better friends. It is not too much to say that man being what he is, there is no conceivable means excepting temptation, which would give to him just those elements which are necessary for his progress toward God. Jesus was "in all points tempted like as we are," primarily that His manhood might reach its full measure, and this entailed such sympathy with the race as ensues upon a common experience. Atonement means a unity with God which has been achieved, not by a divine fiat, but by a choice of the human will that has repelled the last attack of God's greatest enemy.

It is always so that in scanning the harsh features of a refining process, the happy result of the process is blurred and forgotten. Temptation is surely an assault to be withstood, but at the same time it is an opportunity to be seized. Viewed in this light life becomes inspiring, not in spite but because of its struggles, and we are able to greet the unseen with a cheer, counting it unmixed joy when we fall into the many temptations which, varied in form, dog our steps from the cradle to the grave. The soldier who is called to the front is stimulated, not depressed; the officer who is bidden by his general to a post of great responsibility, and so of hardship and peril, is thrilled with the joy of his

task. An opportunity has been given him to prove himself worthy of great trust, which can be done only at the cost of great trouble.

This is a true picture of temptation. And the result of it all is a nature invigorated and refined, a character made capable of close friendship with God, to say nothing of the unmeasured joy that is the attendant of nobility of soul and stalwart Christian manhood.

§ 2. *The majesty of conflict with temptation.* — One is often depressed by the seemingly inglorious character of our temptations. They are so mean, petty and commonplace. If they had in them something to rouse in the heart that love of romance, that is a saving element in human nature, one could fight better. Now temptation has this very element. But spiritual eyes are needed to discern the glory of the commonplace, the romance of the inglorious. God has been trying with divine patience to convince men of this from the very beginning. The story of the first temptation of the first human beings, in its poetic dress points to the romance of life's struggle. Jacob's wrestling bout with the mysterious being by the river's brink, is a view of the underside of any struggle against temptation, as God sees it, when the tempted one fights to win.

Above all in the narrative of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, is the majesty of conflict with evil made plain. It is a record which exceeds in dramatic splendour the story of "Faust," or the realism of "Pilgrim's Progress." And in it we arrive at the paradoxical truth that the temptations of Jesus were just as commonplace as ours, and that ours are just as glorious as His, — His, of course, having a completeness which none others could have, for the most complete temptation is the temptation of the most complete.

Looking beneath the surface of the story, we find ourselves face to face with the well-known temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Wrapped in contemplation upon what His Divine sonship involved, He was driven into solitude, and tempted, as He worked out His life's plan, to substitute evil independence for good dependence, then to flee to the opposite extreme and substitute evil dependence for good independence, and finally to disregard the means in His zeal for a righteous end. These temptations are as common as humanity and as uninspiring as night. Could one have stood by when Jesus was struggling with them, doubtless nothing more would have been seen than is visible to-day when some man in loneliness, with

his eyes lifted toward the hills, wins the mastery over himself and his unseen tempters. Yes, the Master's temptations were just as commonplace as ours. Why, then, this fine dressing up of the commonplace? Because, when in after days Jesus told His companions of His conflict and victory, He saw with the illumination of retrospect what at the moment of the struggle He could not see, the glory of it all. The story is not a fiction of the imagination. It is a true picture of what occurred, a revelation of the splendour that lies at the foundation of every spiritual contest, a record of literal truth not perceived at the time, but clear to the vision after all was over.

"After all was over"—the mean and commonplace incidents of to-day, form the raw material out of which is woven the romance of to-morrow. The ugliest facts make the choicest romance after they have been tempered in the crucible of time. Ask a soldier how much romance there was when the fight was hot. The sublime in battle is visible only from the vantage ground of victory. Often when the life of some humble and afflicted child of God comes to a close, we see what was hidden from our eyes during his days on earth—the heroism of his career. At first we esteem him "stricken,

smitten of God, and afflicted." Afterward we admire the grandeur and largeness of the life that once seemed so narrow and lame. Before death the character of the affliction claims our attention; afterward the character of the afflicted; now the ugly fact and then the glory; "first that which is natural and afterward that which is spiritual." Consequently there are two methods of recording human history — bare fact, concrete, grim, commonplace; its romance, abstract, majestic and just as real. We need both kinds of description — Gethsemane with its agony and gouts of blood, and the wilderness with its dramatic imagery. Neither one is more real than the other. If the wilderness had its grim side, Gethsemane had its romantic side. The ideal is realized, when the real is idealized. Grant the truth of this — and who will gainsay it? — and it follows that while the temptations of Jesus were as commonplace as ours, ours are as glorious as His. S. Paul saw it all quite plainly, when in radiant language he rolled out to his Ephesian friends that superb call to battle. "Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against

the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." There is nothing in the whole of Scripture that makes life seem more splendid and glowing, and yet the occasion is one of extreme peril and hardship — the moment of temptation. It is not so that the scientific character of our age, with its darting electricity and whirring wheels, forbids romance to lift its head. Glory of the highest type will live as long as dauntless human souls aspire to God, let the world be as matter of fact or as evil as it chooses. The only thing that can dim glory is the domination of sin in man.

§ 3. So much for the splendid opportunity which temptation affords. How to meet it is what the story of the life of the Son of Man makes manifest.

(*a*) It is noticeable that neither by precept nor example are we encouraged to pray for the removal of temptation. Once, it is true, Jesus expressed it as His desire that a cup of pain might pass from Him, but He conditioned His prayer — "not My will, but Thine, be done." God did not remove the cup, but what was better still He gave Him strength to drink it. A prayer of S. Paul's was treated in

like manner. The thorn in the flesh was not withdrawn, but it was transformed into a means of imparting spiritual vigour—"My grace is sufficient for thee." It is said of Pascal, whose last years were full of agony, that his malady became a new quality of his genius and helped to perfect it. Christian character as well as great genius "has the power of elevating, transmuting, serving itself by the accidental conditions about it, however unpromising." *

This being so, even Gethsemane is an encouragement to the man who is sore tried, to pray for power to transcend his trial rather than that it may be swept out of his life by the hand of God.

> *'Tis life whereof our nerves are scant,*
> *More life and fuller that I want,*

and not exemption from trial.

The lingering on in life of a temptation, which, if not born of past sin, at any rate has been intensified by self-indulgence, affords us our only chance of expressing penitence to God for failure in loyalty to Him in this respect or that. How can the man, in whom the fires of passion are dead, express before God his sorrow for sins against purity

* *Walter Pater.*

in days that are gone? It is easy to conceive of such a person entreating God to give him back his temptation, that, by a reversal of former decisions, he may prove the reality of his penitence. So far as we can see, the one chance a man has of regaining a lost virtue, is through the very temptation by means of which he was robbed of it. Excessive resistance wins back, slowly but surely, what was lost by excessive indulgence. What is needed is not freedom *from* but freedom *in* temptation. This latter is possible for every Christian.

(*b*) Freedom in the life of temptation is achieved by meeting every enticement to sin with an upward rise toward virtue. It is quite inadequate to beat off temptation. We must spoil the strong man and possess ourselves of his goods. One sad feature of life is that we always undershoot the mark, and for the most part perfection in purpose results in nothing better than mediocrity in achievement. It is the sure fate of the man that is contented to view temptation merely as an invitation to hell which must be declined, that he will yield at least occasionally to the sin to which he is tempted. Only he who flings himself upward when the pull comes to drag him down, can hope to break the force of temptation. Temptation may be an invi-

tation to hell, but much more is it an opportunity to reach heaven. At the moment of temptation sin and righteousness are both very near the Christian; but of the two the latter is the nearer.

Walk in the spirit and you put yourself in such a position as to be unable to fulfil the lusts of the flesh. Meet the negation of sin with the affirmation of righteousness. When Satan challenges you to wrestle with him, turn about and wrestle with God for a blessing.

(*c*) There is no reason to be afraid of temptation, that is to say if it is not a temptation into which we have entered unnecessarily, but one that is consequent upon the fulfilment of duty. God does not allow us to be tempted beyond our powers. But this is not all. Our fearlessness should show itself in our attitude. We must meet our temptations face to the foe. The temptations of Jesus never struck Him from behind but always smote Him in the face. There is only one kind of temptation which we are advised to run from, and that is the temptation to fleshly lust. Evasion is for the most part a sign of defeat, not of victory. The man who would gain freedom in temptation must be

One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward.

With this thought we leave the subject of temptation, that strange mystery which proves man and makes him less unworthy of friendship with God, which is at once an opportunity and a snare, glorious and commonplace.

Chapter vi

Knitting Broken Friendship

UT the best of us do not always rise to the opportunity which temptation presents. A gust comes for which we are not prepared, and we are swept off our feet. And the earliest penalty of sin visits the transgressor simultaneously with its committal — that depressing sense of loneliness and separation from God that has been the bitter experience of every one, and that is so graphically represented in the story of the first act of disobedience. Every one who does wrong, by the deed of wrong itself, hides himself from God just as Adam and Eve did. Sin is acting apart from God, a withdrawing of our allegiance from Him, an ignoring of His voice, a snapping of the bonds of friendship.

When this unhappy experience occurs what are we to do to have the breach between ourselves and God filled up and fellowship with Him re-established? It would seem natural to answer that as soon as we perceive that we have fallen we should

pick ourselves up and go on our way without further thought about the dead past. It is out of our reach; it cannot be recalled, and to dwell upon it is disastrous.

A man who has exercised a wide influence over English thought declared sin to be "not a monster to be mused on, but an impotence to be got rid of. All thinking about it, beyond what is indispensable for the final effort to get rid of it, is waste of energy and waste of time. We then enter that element of morbid and subjective brooding in which so many have perished. This sense of sin, however, it is also possible to have not strongly enough to beget the firm effort to get rid of it."*

Probably of the two dangers mentioned by Matthew Arnold, the latter is the greater in these days in which an "amiable opposition" to sin as merely a pardonable flaw in human nature is so widely taught.

Whatever risk there may be in looking sin squarely in the face, and however difficult we find it to strike the mean between morbid brooding and a total disregard for the past, there never yet was a man who achieved the royal dignity of Christian character without a painful and thoroughgoing grappling

* *Matthew Arnold, St. Paul and Protestantism.*

with his former self. Men may strive to forget the past by weaving about themselves a web of absorbing interests. But a day of reckoning must come, as it came to Adam and Eve in "the cool of the day," as it came to Jacob as he wrestled for better things that night by the plunging stream, as it came to S. Peter when he went out and sowed the seed of a chastened character in scalding tears. Were relief from the haunting memory of badness the only thing to be considered, a calm, fearless scrutinizing of sins committed is the one cure. The way to forget sin is to remember it before God—yes, even to the deliberate raking over the ashes of the days that are gone lest some fault should escape observation. A sense of sinfulness is the earliest indication of awakening holiness. It seems as though the common idea concerning the repentance of the Publican in the story of the Publican and Pharisee, as told by the Master, were short of the truth. Surely there is no ground for thinking that Christ commends the penitence of the Publican, who expressed his sorrow by saying "God be merciful to me, a sinner," as being ideal. Far from it. Poor and weak and young as was this appeal, it was infinitely more valuable in the sight of God and efficacious than the finely phrased self-

laudation of the Pharisee. Penitence rises from a sense of sinfulness to a recognition of sins.

It is not hard to perceive why this must be. The past strikes its roots into the present, and until in some true sense the past has been undone it is bound to poison the motives and deeds of to-day. Of course when a thing is done it is done. No amount of effort can undo it in the sense of obliterating it from history. But it is not only possible but necessary that *in intention* it should be undone and that so far as can be its evil consequences checked. With the aid of the imagination and the will the life that has been lived apart from God may be lived over again with Him. This in His sight is to undo it, for the motive is the deed, and intention is the most powerful of realities.

But this is not all. It is a law of life governing all fellowship that transparent frankness is the only atmosphere in which friendship can exist. A wrong committed ought to be followed by full admission of the deed. And it is further noticeable that this admission is not dependent upon whether or not the person wronged is conscious of the wrong. Prudence demands, though not nearly so widely as is commonly supposed, that under certain conditions a sin against society should not be publicly

confessed or even made known to the person chiefly concerned. But where this happens the penitent should feel silence as a weighty penance, and long for a day when he can throw open his life so that he will be seen to be just what he is. We are only what we are in the sight of God. It is a grief to many a holy man that because of his secret sins he is better thought of than he deserves; and he will hail the day when all that is hidden will be uncovered and made known, so that with the last veil torn from his character he will be able to join unreservedly in free and humble fellowship with all men.

No Christian man has any more warrant for trying to "dissemble or cloak" his sins before his fellow-men than he has for trying to do the same thing before God. To rejoice when we see others attributing to us qualities which we do not possess, or to congratulate ourselves when we escape detection — or at least when we think we do, for as often as not men see our faults when we think they do not — upon the committal of some sin, is to deepen that line of deceit that furrows most characters. There is no social quality quite so splendid as transparency. It is said by one * well quali-

* *H. Scott Holland.*

fied to speak of Mr. Gladstone that "the man in him leapt forward to express itself with transparent simplicity. If he were subtle he showed at once why he wanted to be subtle. And in spite of everything that could be said about his intellectual subtlety, it remains that to the very last the dominant note of his character was simplicity — the simplicity of a child; with the child's naïve self-disclosure, the child's immediate response to a situation, without cloak or disguise."

Now it is just this simple, childlike transpareney that the Christian must cultivate in every respect. When it so happens to a man that he may not tell his wrong-doing to the person immediately wronged, then let him go to some spiritual friend, or to his pastor, who stands as the representative of Christian society, as well as the ambassador of Christ, and share with him his grief.

The exception referred to above — where an open confession would result in social injury — does not at all alter the fact that perfect frankness alone makes fellowship possible. More often than not when one friend tells another of some piece of petty meanness by which friendship has been marred, the injured party already knows all about it. The confession is not made to give information, but to

open up the soul that has sinned so that the process of healthy social life may be free to work again. It is not wholly explicable, but it is a law which governs human intercourse.

Precisely in the same way this law works in the life of fellowship with God. He knows more about our sins than we can tell Him. But by telling them over, their occasion, their guilt, before Him, the soul is new-born into His love, and the warmth of His compassion melts the emotions. This is a first requisite in genuine personal religion — frankness before God; and frankness among men is second only to it.

In requiring perfect openness of life from men God asks only what He gives. He is Light. There is no knowledge of His Person which man is capable of grasping which He does not offer. He tears open His bosom and reveals the most sacred depths of His being. He asks man to do likewise that fellowship may follow.

So far we have considered what man should do when, whether for a moment or for years, he has walked apart from God. He must review the past and *in intention* live it over again with God, turning his back upon everything that is amiss. But this alone is incomplete. The heart must receive

some sort of assurance that the work of penitence is acceptable in God's sight. There is no thirst of the soul so consuming as the desire for pardon. A sense of its bestowal is the starting point of all goodness. It comes bringing with it, if not the freshness of innocence, yet a glow of inspiration that nerves feeble hands for hard tasks, a fire of hope that lights anew the old high ideal so that it stands before the eye in clear relief, beckoning us to make it our own. To be able to look into God's face and know with the knowledge of faith that there is nothing between the soul and Him is to experience the fullest peace the soul can know. Whatever else pardon may be, it is above all things admission into full fellowship with God. It is not a release from certain penalties which the natural course of sin entails, though it brings with it power and wisdom to endure and to use penalties so that they become means by which lost virtues are restored and the whole character reinvigorated. The sense of fellowship comes out with singular force when for the first time the pardoned soul leaps out from under a weight of sin. The joy of prayer, the fearless approach to God, the contemplation of His personal love—all this testifies to what pardon is. The absolution of the dying robber on Calvary

was not merely an admission into Christ's privileges, but a call to His fellowship and a speedy call at that — "*To-day* shalt thou be *with Me* in Paradise."

The first awakening of the soul to a sense of pardon makes this very vivid. But somehow as time goes on and repeated falls on the upward climb discourage the soul, the difficulty of grasping God's pardon seems to increase. Confession is made and sorrow is felt, but God's face seems hidden behind a cloud. Then is it comforting to remember that all clouds are earthborn. The trouble is that we reflect our own impatience and discouragement up into the life of God. Because we chafe under our almost imperceptible progress we imagine God does the same. His first absolutions were full and generous, but how can these later ones be so? Surely they must be grudgingly bestowed. So we argue, and the latest forgiving message of God, a message as strong and full as the first, falls upon listless ears. The absolution that comes to the penitent after the seventy-times-seven repetitions of a sin is all that the first one was. Absolution is never less than absolution. It always admits to fellowship so complete that it could not be closer.

Chapter vii

Friendship in God

FRIENDSHIP is not only *with* God but also *in* God. Fellowship with God has for its corollary fellowship with man in God. And the latter in the greatness of its dignity and privilege is second only to the former. The religion of Christ does not allow of one without the other. The Church, which is the divinely ordered means by which man is admitted into and sustained in his fellowship with God, is also the ideal society of men. God never considers men apart from, but always as a part of, a great social order — a social order that is not a concourse of independent units, but a body instinct with life, a society which is not an organization but an organism. The description of our relationship to one another is couched in the same terms that tell of our relationship to Christ — "members one of another," "members of Christ."

It is God's will that the Church should be coterminous with society, and that the unity of life thus

produced should make the "communion of saints" a reality on earth and not a mere theory. Past years have seen much earnest straining to gain a truer conception of God, that fellowship with and love for Him might be according to His will. All this theological effort will be lost, unless it is followed up by a no less strenuous effort to make the brotherhood of man a fact. The Master gave a new commandment of love, a commandment new not in essence but rather in intensity and comprehension. After the injunction to love God comes the equally unequivocal injunction to love man — "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." That is to say, personality whether in ourselves or in others is to receive the highest reverence and consideration, and that without any partiality. Humanity being full of diversity, this commandment requires a most thorough and intelligent study of society and its elements. Heresies concerning God have been and are destructive of unity; but heresies concerning man are productive of almost equal mischief. If the first part of the commandment of love calls us to a study of theology, the second demands a study of sociology — an old science under a new name. It is worth while noting that the Apostle who earned the name of "the Divine," or as we would

say "the Theologian," by reason of his familiar acquaintance with the deep things of God, was the same who felt that the appeal most worth urging with the scant breath of extreme old age was, that men should love one another; and he repeats this simple phrase until the world wonders—"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth."

But it must never be forgotten that human fellowship and friendship must under the best of conditions be sectional and shallow, and under the worst, disastrous, unless it be "in Christ," that is, in God. The true ideal of human fellowship is realized only thus. And it is such a unity as would be the outcome of fellowship in Christ, for which the Master prayed at the last. Ecclesiastical unity does not necessarily produce unity of life, though the latter must include the former in some true sense. Christian unity has a twofold basis, the love of God and the love of man. This differentiation in the commandment of love, is of Christ's own making, and cannot be ignored by His followers.

In considering the ideal human fellowship it is vital to remember that the spiritual, here as elsewhere, is built upon the natural, the spiritual entering into, interpreting and developing the natural. And when

the word "natural" is used, that which is purely accidental and artificial in life is not meant, but that which is fundamental and belongs to the very constitution of humanity. For instance, trade relations and conventional institutions of whatever kind are evanescent. To use them for a foundation is to build on sand. An eternal fabric cannot gain coherence from a creation of man's whim or genius. Indeed the institutions of commerce as well as all official intercourse, can be constructed with effectiveness, not to say justice, only when built upon the recognition of the dignity of humanity and the sacredness of personality, with equality of consideration for each. And herein lies the solution of the whole social problem in all its ramifications.

The fundamental relationship of life is such as springs out of that common humanity, which, in the last analysis, is a man's only absolute possession, be he prince or pauper, wise or ignorant. And this humanity of ours is a precious possession, not always perhaps for what it has actually become, but for what it is in process of becoming, or, it may be, only because of those latent possibilities which the Incarnation has declared to be contained in that which is born of woman. Once armed with this thought, Kant's valuable negative advice never

to treat humanity as a thing* but always as a person, never as a means merely but always as an end, is in order.

It is one of the evils springing out of an intercourse that is so largely official, that on all sides men are valued and thought of, only or chiefly on the side of economic efficiency. That is to say, they are treated with only that amount of consideration which is due a machine. A simple illustration will suffice. The mistress of a household on coming down stairs one morning was greeted by her maid, who was dusting in the hall, with a "Good morning," and, "Do you know, Mrs. Z——, that I have been with you five years to-day?" "Have you?" was the response, "You have left some dust on that chair." The mistress boasted doubtless that she had "reminded her servant of her place." No further comment is needed. The maid thought herself to be a person, but was reminded that she was a thing.

Again, if the baker is thought of as a mere convenience for baking bread, all demands he may make beyond those which will enable him to pro-

* *That is called a thing to which no event can be imputed as an action. Hence every object devoid of freedom is regarded as a thing.— Kant, Metaphysic of Ethics.*

duce good bread, will be fiercely contested. The conditions under which the bread is baked are a paltry incident, provided they do not in any way discommode the consumer, and the claim made by the journeyman baker for opportunity and means to realize the God-given ambitions of his manhood, ambitions which perchance have nothing to do with baking bread, is scouted in much the same way that a request to decorate a machine with gold trimmings would be scouted. Of course it is as wrong to ignore the former's claim, as it would be right to ignore the demand for expensive and useless embellishments for a piece of machinery; for one is a person and the other is a thing.

It is because men have been thought of as things, that there are such plague-spots on the social body as sweatshops. All movements that compel the attention of the consumer to a recognition of his relation to the producer as a person, are worthy of the most careful study and the highest commendation. Preferential dealing, that is to say, dealing preferably with such merchants as we know to have humane regard for those who produce and handle the goods offered for sale, is merely a passing phase of the attempt to recognize as persons

those who, though far removed from us, yet touch our lives and minister to our necessities; and the movement deserves support and encouragement because of the principle which actuates it. When life was less complex than at present, and the *entrepreneur* and middleman did not exist to obscure the relationship between consumer and producer, it was easier to realize the responsibility of the one toward the other than it is now. However, it is of elementary necessity that men should learn that the accident which hides one section of society from the easy observation of another, does not lessen one whit the mutual responsibility which each bears towards the other. Nor does the difficulty of gathering information afford an excuse. In these days of pertinacious investigation and organized experience, there is no set of conditions so complex as to baffle ultimately the determined investigator of social phenomena, or to escape satisfactory adjustment.

Once again, the cry of the workman for a living wage, is but an indication that the labourer is coming to a realization of the dignity and fullness of manhood, and is inviting others to share in this discovery of himself. Who can turn a deaf ear to his appeal, excepting those who deny a man's right

to realize himself? The doctrine of the average wage, that is, the wage which is determined by a "brazen law" of one kind or another, whether that to which the name of Ricardo is attached or some other, equally unmanageable, is fast giving place to that of the living wage. The living wage is the evolution of the average wage; the former phrase declares that men are requiring official dealings to be more humane than of yore, as well as that the law of wages is not an almighty tyrant to which society must bow, but a law which is more or less obedient to the dictates of man's will. There are those among political economists who now maintain it to be more reasonable to claim, that prices must conform to wages, than wages to prices. It is worth while adding in this connection that the living wage is bound to be progressive, as the duty of treating men as persons and not as things, comes to be more firmly imbedded in the public conscience. Some persons are ready to admit the justice of the theory of Christian democracy, though unwilling to accept many of its logical conclusions. The promulgation of the principle of democracy in its mildest form, creates new desires or awakens dormant ones in the undermost men, and of course provision must be made for satisfying these, else

the doctrine which gave the desires birth is hideously cruel. A living wage some years since, had the phrase obtained in the language, would have signified for the most part a wage sufficient to sustain animal life. That is, the wage-earning man would have been recognized as an animal but not a person. Or perhaps it would have meant a wage capable of creating economic efficiency, in which case it would have indicated that the wage-earner was viewed as a thing. Now the idea underlying a living wage is a wage sufficient for the sustenance of human life, of life in which there is room for freedom of choice, and where the whole man is taken into consideration.

It is to the credit of society, that so much earnestness is being expended to-day in the effort to humanize the various official relationships of life. But it is a cause for shame, on the other hand, that among Christian men there should have been so deplorable a falling away from elementary Christian principle, as to make this effort necessary. Let it suffice for the present to insist that until men more generally recognize their fellows, whatever be their position in life, to be persons and not things, wide fellowship at any rate is an utter impossibility. And it is from this point that all at-

tempts to solve social problems must take their beginning. It might prove a useful experiment if occasionally, for a short period, we were to test our love for others by loving ourselves as we love them, treating ourselves as we treat them. If it so happened that we were living reasonably near to the Golden Rule, our conduct would not have to be materially, if at all, changed to do this; but if we happened, on the other hand, to be treating our neighbour as a thing when the experiment took place, there is no doubt that we should immediately become so unhappy and full of pain, as to be incapable of prolonging the experience.

Chapter viii

Friendship in God (continued)

THE official temper of mind is by no means the only bar to wide fellowship. Exclusiveness and temperamental dislike are responsible for a great many sins against brotherly love, and must be fought down by every true follower of our Lord. When men are left to themselves, they gravitate into mutually exclusive groups composed of congenial classes or of congenial types. But Christianity steps in and breaks up these little sets, in order to blend them into one varied and splendid whole. The vision which S. John had revealed to him, was humanity in all its variety — "out of every nation, and of all tribes and peoples and tongues" — but at perfect unity with itself, a complete and harmonious family.

§ 1. Probably there is no temper of mind more difficult to master than that of exclusiveness. In the evolution of society class differentiations have come into being, differentiations which, at the time of

their appearance, may have been a necessary phase of progress, but which, in the development of Christian thought, should pass away. It would not be right or wise to contend for the immediate obliteration of all artificial distinctions in life, for conventionalities are often social safeguards and have their place in civilization. But surely the earnest disciple of Jesus must array all the forces at his command against the continuance of customs that have been separated from their usefulness, and are perpetuated only to be stumbling blocks to human fellowship.

The worth of conventionalism has for its supreme test the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. When He quieted the strife of the disciples, who were filled with the ignoble lust of domination, He inaugurated a new social order. "He that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." The old order made kings the recipients of much service, the new calls them to give much service; the old order led men to strive for honour, the new inspires them to avoid honour unless bound up with an enlarged opportunity to serve; the old order prized whatever privileges set men above and apart from their fellows, the new seeks everything that will

bring them nearer to their fellows. So merit and reward, privilege and responsibility, greatness and service must never be separated. Where they have been separated in the past, as well as where they are in the present, the result is exclusiveness. Men cling to prerogatives which in common justice they have no real claim upon, beyond the flimsy plea of hereditary right and the permission of society. Out of this have grown those groups of persons who, though possessing nothing but a very common humanity indeed, would, from a sense of superiority derived from a name, or from the false prestige given by wealth and social position, withhold their fellowship from all but a select few. If men could but realize the cramping influence on character of exclusiveness, how quickly would they hasten to divest themselves of every trace of the vice of snobbishness! Dives lived in exclusive society after death because he did so before death. He was no farther from Lazarus in the other world than he was in this; the gulf created here was "fixed" there, that is all. And among the "losses of the saved" will be lack of capacity for wide fellowship.

The dignity of humanity is so great that nothing can add to its greatness, excepting what ennobles

human nature itself. Wealth, social position, mere intellectual attainment, no more deserve deference or homage, than do the tatters of a pauper or the ignorance of a dolt. No man insults human nature or demeans his personality so much as he who bows down to these accidents, excepting only the man who receives homage on the ground not of what he is but of what he has. We may neither pay homage to, nor receive it for, any of those things which belong merely to time and of which death will strip us bare; though piety, spiritual wisdom, and all forms of moral power, always and everywhere, demand homage and reverence.

The true basis on which Christian fellowship is begun and maintained, is our common humanity —that which is essential and not that which is accidental. Our Lord drew men to Himself and had human fellowship with them, by virtue of the completeness and attractiveness of His splendid manhood. He had none of the accidents of life to use, and He was not weak without them. He was the most refined among men, and yet He found companionship among the peasant folk. Social differentiations did not enter into our Lord's reckoning. He ignored them, reaching through them and past them. It is touching to remember that one

of the earliest companionships in Paradise of the human soul of Jesus, was the resumption of almost His last intercourse on earth. As the soul of the penitent outlaw and robber, "pale from the passion of death," went into the society of Paradise, it was received and welcomed by the Man, Christ Jesus.

It is a myth that the wise and cultured must confine their fellowship to the wise and cultured.* By means of literature men and women of high privilege, have joined hands with those whose lives were bare of everything but character — with Adam Bede and with Uncle Tom. If this is possible with the creations of fiction, it is capable of being widely true in actual life. The richest human nature is often found in the most obscure places, as the experience

* *Cf. Browning's verses in* Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau, *where the result of false culture, or the abuse of culture, is referred to:* —

Man is made in sympathy with man
At outset of existence, so to speak;
But in dissociation, more and more,
Man from his fellow, as their lives advance
In culture; still humanity, that 's born
A mass, keeps flying off, fining away
Ever into a multitude of points,
And ends in isolation, each from each.

of every social worker from Edward Denison to the resident in the newest "settlement," will testify. True refinement is not the result of paltry conventionalism, the flimsy creation of an artificial society; true refinement is the inalienable possession of that character in which the Spirit of God rules, in which the material is made the handmaid of the spiritual. At first men went out into the highways of the city, armed with their privileges, thinking that they had everything to give. But they soon learned that this spirit could only end in condescension, which is fatal to fellowship, for fellowship means give and take, and that the poor and unprivileged had much to give. Unless representatives from the different classes of society are contributing their special gifts to our lives, life is poor indeed. Wealth of fellowship consists not in numbers, but in variety.

When men reach out for wider fellowship, they must not forget that no man ever yet won his fellows through his own interests. He must, by the subtle power of sympathy, dive beneath the surface of other lives and court their interests. Even God failed to win men, until He made man's concerns wholly His own by becoming Man. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though

He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich."

§ 2. Temperamental dislike is another obstacle to Christian fellowship to be conquered. It is something found wherever human nature is. And men commonly excuse quarrelsomeness, rudeness and other unchristian conduct on this score, though the excuse is by no means valid. Probably all of us are afflicted with a natural antipathy to certain kinds of temperament, but at least we need not humour it. It was part of God's design, that human society should be enriched by variety of disposition. That is a poor garden which contains but one kind of flower, beautiful as its blossom may be. True beauty consists in variety; and monotony is the height of ugliness. It is a reason for thankfulness that human nature is so wonderfully diversified that no two human beings are exactly alike, and that there is a whole gamut of temperamental difference in the race.

Now it is a part of the work of Christianity, to reconcile dispositions that are naturally antipathetic and jarring. And the process by which this is brought to pass, is probably one of the most beneficial disciplines to which men are subjected. The Church is a great mixing bowl, in which all this vast variety is brought into close touch and blended

together into a harmonious whole. "The very purpose of the one Church for all the men of faith in Jesus is that the necessity for belonging to one body—a necessity grounded on divine appointment—shall force together into a unity men of all sorts and different kinds; and the forces of the new life which they share in common are to overcome their natural repugnance and antipathies, and to make the forbearance and love and mutual helpfulness which corporate life requires, if not easy, at least possible for them."*

That society is at once the most beautiful and the most powerful which is composed of the largest variety of temperaments, exercising their various faculties in unity and mutual helpfulness. Some persons imagine that the most desirable parochial life is where all the parishioners are of one stripe, instead of that in which there is a finely disciplined diversity. A parish of dead uniformity would be comfortable but not educative, quiet but colourless and insipid. Unquestionably certain natures are so constituted as to irritate us every time we come near them. And unless we are very carefully on our guard we will not treat such persons justly or courteously, much less will we be ready to render them deli-

* *Gore on Ephesians, p.* 189.

cate service. Quite unconsciously we exhibit our temper of mind. There may be the determination not to allow our feelings to rise to the surface, but nevertheless before we know it we have done the mischief; and somehow the bitterness we entertain has been let loose, not by a word or a look, perhaps, but by some subtle telepathic or psychic influence which opens the secret of our soul to our companion. There is nothing more infectious than a temper of mind. It seems to leap out of one soul and impart itself to another without heeding the ordinary laws of transmission. Anger, lust, suspicion, dislike, jealousy smirch not only the souls in which they lie restrained though not conquered, but others that come within the radius of their wide-reaching influence.

Fortunately this power of infection is not confined to evil passions, but belongs even in a larger degree to those which are good. And herein lies the remedy for temperamental dislike. If we stop short at choking it down, we can never make a friend of one whose disposition is naturally repugnant to us. Sooner or later our dislike will crop out and a gulf be made. If, on the other hand, the dislike is displaced by generous, full love — love that is a force and not a mere emotion — fellowship, and eventu-

ally friendship, will become possible. There may be grounds often for our antipathies. Some people have the misfortune to be graceless, awkward and repellant; others are unattractive if not positively disagreeable to every one — bad-tempered, perhaps, or mischief-makers. To educate these in Christian fellowship is probably as large a public service as could be readily rendered. "It is no great matter," says Jeremy Taylor,* "to live lovingly with good-natured, with humble and meek persons; but he that can do so with the froward, with the wilful, and the ignorant, with the peevish and perverse, he only hath true charity."

§ 3. A third bar to Christian fellowship is what, for want of a better phrase, may be termed a weakness for interesting people. That is to say, the humanity that is within easy reach seems commonplace and uninteresting, so that men of our intimate acquaintance often appear to be hardly worth while labouring for. Hence it is a common habit to reserve our best thought, our best manners and our best service for strangers, making little positive effort to love and serve those with whom we are thrown into daily contact. Nowhere is human perversity more glaring than in the sad truth lurking behind the pro-

* *Works: Vol. vii.* 624.

verb: "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country and house." The value of those who stand nearest to us is lowered by means of their very nearness. On the other hand the persons who are outside our immediate circle, however comprehensive it may be, seem to be more interesting than the very average folk who are our ordinary companions. We long for companionship with men of this finer type.

Of course this is all a delusion. Human nature is full of interest wherever we find it, that which is nearest as well as that which is farthest removed. The men we would like to know and serve, are no more worthy of attention than the men who stand shoulder to shoulder with us. But those who have the largest claim upon our attention and service, are our immediate friends and neighbours. Indeed the only way to arm ourselves against disappointment, as the boundaries of our fellowship are enlarged, is so to attach ourselves to the people near at hand as to learn the true dignity of all human nature and the almost unfathomable depths of every personality. Otherwise an acquisition in acquaintanceship will, after the first glow of novelty has worn off, only reveal one more uninteresting person.

§ 4. There is one other duty that ought to be at least touched upon in this connection, though it has been referred to in a former chapter — the duty of praying for others. There is no more delicate service in the whole round of human action than that of intercessory prayer. It is so hidden as to have a special beauty on that account. While men are all unconscious that we are thinking of them, we fold our arms about them and bring them up before God for blessing and guidance. Intercessory prayer might be defined as loving our neighbour on our knees. The common objection, "What good can it do? Will not God bless men just as much without our prayers as with them?" seems to have a certain amount of weight. But a very little reflection shows that it does not amount to much. Even though intercessory prayer did nothing more than put us who pray in a desirable frame of mind toward those for whom we pray, it would be an exercise of great value. However, as a matter of fact, it accomplishes much more than this. Besides making our feeling of fellowship stronger, it really brings something to those for whom we offer our petitions. Human life is as closely bound up on the spiritual as on any other side of our being. It is quite certain that if we withhold the duties of ser-

vice in other ways God does not supply our lack, so far as we can see, but human life suffers through our neglect. If all else in our experience is governed by law, why should we believe that the spiritual part of life stands alone and is not affected by spiritual service? There is from analogy every reason to suppose, that those who are not prayed for suffer spiritual loss on that account.

But the immediate point to be made is that the height of Christian friendship cannot be reached without intercession. It has been pointed out by a spiritual teacher * that it makes a great difference in our feelings towards others if their needs and their joys are on our lips in prayer; as also it makes a vast difference in their feelings towards us if they know that we are in the habit of praying for them. There is no chasm in society that cannot be firmly and permanently bridged by intercession; there is no feud or dislike that cannot be healed by the same exercise of love.

Here, then, as in all else, if we are to come anywhere near the ideal we must lift our eyes to God. Friendship in God is possible only for those who bring society before God in prayer.

* *Canon Gore.*

Chapter ix

The Church in Prayer

THUS far little has been said of the more corporate aspect of the spiritual life—of army movements, so to speak. Our minds have been chiefly on the duties of men in their individual capacity. Not that any one can ever behave so that he alone is affected by his output of energy. Whether consciously or unconsciously every human being that breathes, according as he moves his will upwards or downwards, elevates or hinders his fellows. The most secret passages of life should be traversed with reference to others, in order that we may be ruled by that beautiful consistency which will enable us to act formally in public without readjusting our whole inner temper. There will be no wrench, no unnatural straining to become what we cannot be at a moment's notice, but on the contrary merely an exhibition under altered conditions of the spirit which has all along actuated us. For instance, one who has not learned to pray

hard for others and to ponder over their welfare, cannot hope to speak to men with any force on spiritual topics. He has not cultivated the frame of mind that will give him power to do it. If he tries, his words will most likely be irreverent cant or an empty echo. It is only out of the fulness of the heart that the mouth can speak effective words. In no department of life is this more true than in corporate worship. The power of public worship is dependent upon and the outcome of healthy and faithful private worship, to say nothing of the rest of the personal life. Those who have true personal religion will feel their life of devotion incomplete without common prayer; a growing desire for public worship is an index of a man's deepening spirituality. On the other hand, when we hear men saying that they do not care for church services, that they can pray just as well at home, and so on, it is safe to conclude that whatever fine-spun theories they may hold, as a matter of fact they are suffering from spiritual atrophy, praying neither at home nor anywhere else. Private devotion whets the appetite for public worship. And those who are in intention true to fundamental Christian principles will not mistake the end of the Church's corporate worship.

The assembling of the congregation is something far larger than the creation of a public occasion for saying private prayers. There are numbers of persons who go through the whole service without a thought for any one but themselves, sucking the liturgy dry of whatever touches their own immediate concerns, but oblivious to those who kneel around; and perhaps private manuals supply the place of the Prayer Book. Such persons squeeze into their own cup all the inspiration that a harmonious concourse of men carries with it, and make no return. Like the horse-leach's daughters their cry is, "Give, give." Could anything be more selfish or more anomalous? There is no effort of imagination, no kindling of sympathy, no struggle to enter under the shadow of the prayer of the congregation, so that they are as completely alone as though they were in a desert place.

Nor is public worship a device for rousing in people a devotional frame of mind, which will enable them to pray better by themselves. Doubtless one indirect effect of the great dignity and beauty of liturgical worship, is to stimulate those who participate in it to a deeper devotion at home. But public worship is a climax, not a mere means to an end; it is the culmination of private devotion,

not its starting point. Without hidden spiritual effort, it is a phantom of the real thing; with it, it is the matchless consummation of adoration, prayer and sympathy. Under the least satisfactory conditions the congregation gathered in God's house has marvellous dignity; the unity of movement, the rich variety and the rhythm of liturgical expression characterize it as the most august of human assemblies.

But the possibilities of the Church in prayer rise to their supremest height, when the congregation is rich with the fruits of personal religion. So closely woven are the public and the private phases of devotion that they are of a piece. The power of the former is due to the hours of secret prayer, the struggles with self, the nerving of the will — in short, all that hidden discipline and training that lie behind the veil of private life. Out of this, corporate worship emerges as effect rises out of cause. However great, then, the private life of devotion is in which men pray to God in the guarded secrecy of their homes, it is only preparatory, leading up to the service of the sanctuary.* Private

** The writer does not hesitate to advise persons who are temporarily residing, as is often the case during the summer, where there is no Episcopal Church, to attend public worship, once a*

prayer is the lesser, public the greater; the former is the exercise of the individual members with special regard to their own development, the latter is the stately movement of the whole body in beautiful unison. Each member contributes to the whole what has been gained in private efforts; each comes to give rather than to receive, or, if it may be so put, to receive through giving; and of course a man can give only what he has gathered. The glimpses we have of heavenly worship* reveal nothing but common worship. We see no individuals standing apart from the throng, absorbed in their own little expression of praise. The ranks are unbroken, and one united and uniting impulse thrills the whole. The visions recorded by S. John are visions not merely of ideal worship in its restricted sense of spoken prayer and praise, but of the ideal life. The fundamental idea of common worship consists in dependence upon God and fellowship with man, and when all life is filled to the full with this twofold spirit, all life will be worship, and let it be said here with firm emphasis, that if

Sunday at least, at the representative Evangelical place of worship of the community. Reading the Church service at home by one's self is no substitute for public worship.

* *As* e. g. *in Rev. v:* 11-14.

we do not lift up our life to the level of our prayers, eventually our prayers will be dragged down to the level of our life. Life in heaven is something more than one long Sunday service; it is the use of all powers and faculties in the spirit of worship, worship representing the highest and finest temper of mind of which we have experience. So when we read the figurative language of S. John, we must remember that he is declaring under the symbolism of worship what the features of heavenly life are—the conscious service of God in a harmonious human society.

Similarly here on earth common worship is a symbol of true life as well as a means of sustaining it. The attention of the congregation gathered before the altar is fixed upon God, and no stronger indication of the reality of brotherhood could be conceived than the visible assembly occupied in a common exercise. When all our activities become saturated with the consciousness of God in His perfection, and with the fact of the oneness of Christ's mystical Body, formal worship will be no more a necessity. But that will be when heaven is reached, for which day there must be some little waiting yet. In the meantime it is vital that worship, as we know it, should not be an excrescence

on life but a real part of it, part of it as truly as the deep, silent tide flowing between narrow banks is part of the same river which above and below is worried by rocks or widened into a lake. Public worship should represent perhaps the most concentrated part of life, but nothing unnatural, nothing out of gear with work-a-day moments. Work should flow into worship as easily as the stream into the ocean. There should be, in all the business of life, the steady application of God's laws, and that underlying consciousness of His Person and Presence which, so far from detracting from the efficiency of our work or preventing full devotion to it, will intensify every energy. The melody of the song is emphasized and supported by the accompaniment, not lost in its multitude of sounds. Given this attitude of mind, and what a simple, natural thing praise with the lips becomes! And how sublime the uprushing flood of hymnody from an assembly of men of like mind!

Again, public worship ought to be the highest and not the only expression of parochial family life. The assembled congregation is the symbol of an enduring Christian brotherhood, where mutual consideration, love and service form the unalterable watchwords. To-day this thought is much ob-

scured by the parochial family having so little reality outside the church walls. This is especially applicable to city churches, where congregations gather from the remotest localities. The parish seems to be fast dying out and the congregation is taking its place. The people who worship in the same building neither know one another nor, in many instances, desire to. This is simply fatal to ideal public worship, one purpose of which at any rate is to quicken and seal the sympathy that already exists as the result of intercourse in the outside world. It is a grave responsibility for any one, for the sake of what he may deem to be larger spiritual privileges, to leave the church of the locality in which he lives and where his natural duties and friendships lie, to go to some distant place of worship where fellowship is impossible. Ideally the worshippers belonging to the parochial family are all known to one another and in frequent personal contact; they do not look to their clergy alone for spiritual help, but also to their fellow laymen. All too often the clergy are supposed to have the sole responsibility of spiritually aiding the members of a parish, whereas, the laity, whether they recognize it or not, have almost an equal responsibility. The clergyman does spiritual

work, not because he is a clergyman, but because he is a Christian; though his special vocation determines the exact form his work should take. If there were more intelligent sympathy among the members of the congregation one with another, what strength would come to the penitent struggling to his feet, what added power to the faithful! Many fail, not because the clergy have been negligent, but because those who are termed the brethren have never extended a helping hand to support, to comfort, to cheer. If a congregation were alive to these responsibilities outside of the church, what a glorious time would be the gathering within its walls — inspiring, thrilling! Indeed, any one who tries to be unselfish and to act in the common concerns of life with reference to his neighbour's interests, any one who has elsewhere learned ever so little about intercession, cannot be unmindful when he comes to church of those who worship by his side, strangers though they be. By the exercise of sympathy, sympathy which he has learned to kindle with less at hand to quicken it to life than that given by the living, breathing forms near by, he can bring close to him his fellow-worshippers, moving into the shadow of their intercessions as well as calling them in to share his own.

It will be noticed that the usual order has been reversed in the foregoing. Usually men are urged to worship well that they may live well;* the proposition that has been made here is that men must live well if they would worship well. It makes little difference which way the thought is expressed, the mode of expression depending on the part of the circle at which we begin our course. Life runs up into worship and worship runs out into life. Each leads into the other.

The use of a liturgy is an added power to public worship. It is only by liturgical aids that public worship can become common worship. A liturgy delivers a congregation from the spiritual idiosyncrasies of a minister as well as disciplining those of the worshippers themselves. The comprehensiveness and symmetry, the saneness and dignity of the Book of Common Prayer are educative forces of enormous value. Left to themselves men lose the true perspective of things; they dwell too much on matters of secondary importance, and become insular in their outlook. A liturgy comes in as a corrective of these constitutional failings; it confronts us with all that is vast in the realm of truth; it calls us away from the consideration

* *See p. 7.*

of those things over which we have pondered until morbidness has seized upon us; it ministers that grateful rest which comes from the mind being freed from the contemplation of one set of interests, by being caught away by and absorbed in new and wider interests; it rounds out the devotional life; it invites us to lean upon the prayers of others as we desire them to lean on ours.

All who aspire to worship well in the congregation must note that the liturgy sets the tone for all devotions. Those who in private affect spiritual exercises foreign to the character of the Prayer Book of the Church, may get a certain emotional satisfaction for the moment, but they purchase the luxury at the cost of weakening their power for common worship. Their private prayers form no preparation for their public prayers. The clergy have it as a grave responsibility to see that the books of private devotion which they put into the hands of their people are such as fit into the Church's system.

Demeanour in the congregation is a small thing to think of after the great central theme that has been holding our attention. But nothing is unworthy of consideration which bears on the perfecting of common worship; and with two simple observa-

tions on demeanour this chapter will be closed. First, regarding the self-consciousness that both distresses the soul and weakens its devotional power. The sense, while in the act of prayer, of being observed by others, is distracting. But is it not a piece of conceit to imagine that we are being observed, widely at any rate, as well as something akin to an insult to those about us? Are we not implicitly charging them with neglect of duty and with irreverence? After all they are probably occupied with their devotions as we ourselves should be. The simplest way of conquering the distraction when it arises is to take the person or persons concerned into our prayers by a conscious act. Then in the second place, as to our own behaviour, it is only common charity to avoid singularity of conduct. Most of the ordinary acts of reverence which the individual may practise, can be so unobtrusively performed as not to attract notice. But when there is a danger of causing distraction to others, as in a strange parish for instance, it is more conducive to real reverence to omit than to observe them. Sometimes the best way to be loyal to a principle is deliberately to break a rule, and if this suggestion be reasonable then why should not a person, unaccustomed to ornate ritual, fall

in with any legitimate customs observed, if he finds himself at any time in a church where such customs obtain?

Chapter x

The Great Act of Worship

THE Eucharist is the Church's great central act of corporate worship. It would be strange, considering the origin of this wonderful mystery, were it otherwise. Even those who regard it as a bare memorial of the historic occurrence of Christ's Passion and nothing more, however highly they may honour the ordinary round of prayer and praise, approach the Eucharist with unwonted awe.

Of course no one conception of its character is complete, as its various and stately names testify. So bound up with the Person of our Lord is it, that, as new treasures of knowledge are laid open concerning Him who is the eternal Son of God, this feast of rich things is proportionately enriched to the participant. Says Jeremy Taylor in his quaint and reverent way: "The Holy Communion or Supper of the Lord is the most sacred, mysterious and useful conjugation of secret and holy things

and duties in the religion."* And withal it is, in essence, of all simple things the most simple — a meal, a meal transformed and exalted, it is true, but still a meal. However difficult the liturgy may be for unlearned folk, the sacrament itself, "the breaking of the bread," is easily understood by every one, even the least wise. Nor is it hard to reconcile the idea of a feast with this meagre meal of a morsel of bread and a sip of wine; for every-day experience has prepared us for the conveyance of great wealth through what has no intrinsic excellence. If a scrap of paper can have the value of heaps of gold, and, by the law of association, an age-worn trinket can become of priceless worth, it suggests no unreality to claim that under certain conditions a simple meal becomes a royal banquet, filling heart and soul and mind, and admitting into the very presence of the Most Holy and Most High. There is diversity in the explication of this act of worship, but whatever difference of opinion there may be regarding its exact nature, those most widely separated in thought will agree in this, that it is a profound rite, and that in it is spiritual wealth. And in these days, when at last men are beginning to perceive that truth is always

* *Works: Vol. viii. p.* 18.

greater than its best definition, no one will contend that what he sees in the Eucharist is all that it contains.*

The best commentary on the Eucharist is the closing chapter of our Lord's mortal career. The Son of Man, as He approached the Cross, drew nigh to that which throughout His ministry He had viewed as a goal; the crucifixion was what He had been preparing Himself for in all that He said and did throughout His human experience; His whole life was indeed a "long going forth to death." He aspired to reach the moment when He would be lifted up from the earth. He saw and predicted with composure all the horror and shame of the Passion, the betrayal and desertion, the scourging and spitting. But He saw even more clearly the dignity and wonder and majesty of the opportunity contained in it all, and spoke of it with suppressed joy: "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be ac-

* *It is not easy to be understood, it is not lightly to be received; it is not much opened in the writings of the New Testament, but still left in its mysterious nature; it is too much untwisted and nicely handled by the writings of the doctors; and by them made more mysterious, and like a doctrine of philosophy made intricate by explications, and difficult by the apperture and dissolution of distinctions.* — *Jeremy Taylor, Works, vol. viii, p.* 8.

complished!" The Cross would test to the full His obedience to God and reveal to what lengths Divine love would go to redeem sinful man. When men near the goal of their innocent ambition their cup of joy is full; nor was Christ's less than full. In the first Eucharist the pain of self-sacrifice for the time being was lost in the joy of self-fulfilment. When He took the bread and the wine and said, "This is My Body which is broken for you," "This is My Blood which is shed for you," He made the sacrifice of Himself. It is this act which separates His death from all other deaths, transforming the crucifixion from a judicial murder into a triumph of self-oblation. It is not the Cross which explains the Eucharist, but rather the Eucharist which explains the Cross.* Eliminate the Eucharist from the story of the Passion and our Lord's death sinks from the atoning act by which the world is reconciled to God into a mere act of resignation to a painful fate, to be classed with the death of Socrates and like heroes. It is the Eucharist that enables us to say that the crucifixion was a sacrifice; that however true it is that Christ was put to death by sinful men, it is a truth of greater magnitude that, according to His repeated predic-

* *Milne.*

tion, He laid down His life for His friends; that the Cross of Calvary, and through it every cross that bows the shoulders of men, has become the instrument of victory and a school of obedience and sympathy.

No act of Christ was a mere personal experience. The Son of Man, as in loving sympathy He declared Himself to be, was the Universal Character whose life must needs concern and touch all other lives. It was His expressed desire that His fellows should share all that He was and did. He, the Son of God, became the Son of Man that we might become Sons of God.* Therefore it is not surprising that, at this the supreme moment of His life, He should bid the representative group who companied with Him, and through them all men, come in and participate in its power and joy; He did not merely lay down His life, but asked others to enter into His experience, saying, "Take, eat; this is My Body," "Drink ye all of this; this is My Blood." For what is the import of this invitation but this? "Associate yourselves with Me,—aye, be one with Me, incorporated into Me, in this great moment of self-offering; for I would present you a willing surrender in and with My-

* 2 *Cor. viii*: 9.

self." The idea of at-one-ment was never more intelligible than in these latter days. We are becoming more and more conscious of how close-wrought are the fibres of the human race; we recognize how the life of any one man affects the life of his fellows, and how the individual can gather into his own soul the sorrows and joys, the perplexities and aspirations of many people. If this is part of the experience of *a* son of man, it follows that *the* Son of Man, by the extension and completion of that quality which, when found in us, is known as sympathy, if by nothing else beyond,—and the character of His personality tells us there is much beyond that is inexplicable—not only may but must take into Himself and hold there for time and eternity the whole race—except so far, alas, as men struggle from the freedom of His embrace into the slavery of a false independence. Thus the Eucharist is the divinely chosen means whereby we men are invited to enter into, and consciously to appropriate the highest points of the victory of the Cross as well as what lies beyond,—the resurrection life. Through it He shares with us His life-giving death and His deathless life, His Divine nature and His perfect humanity, and we are "accepted in the Beloved."

The various titles of the sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood suggest its various aspects,* one of which, and that the one that happily is most common in our Church, we shall consider — the Holy Communion. This title indicates the view of the sacrament which most readily appeals to the human heart. The Holy Communion means, of course, "the Holy Fellowship" — not "a" but "the," that fellowship which above all others is holy, the end of which is to make all who participate in it holy. It is fellowship with the Father in Christ — not merely with Christ; that is not the whole of it, for Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Man as He is, is the "Way" to the Father. Nor is it an ordinary fellowship, of which the fellowship of mere men is a complete image. Ordinary fellowship allows two lives to intertwine; but here so close is the relationship that "Christ *with* us," "we *with* Christ" is inadequate to describe the intimacy, and "we *in* Christ," "Christ *in* us," phrases which no one dare to apply to any other friendship, can alone tell the tale. And "we in Christ" not "Christ in us" is the grander and

* *See a valuable little book, Some Titles and Aspects of the Eucharist, by E. S. Talbot, D. D. (Bishop of Rochester). Rivington, Percival & Co., London.*

more frequent phrase. "In Christ" tells of the unmeasured wealth of fellowship, divine and human, which is the Christian heritage; it is the whole parable of the vine and the branches in two syllables.* This is the Godward aspect of the sacrament. And in this connection three things are to be noted:—

§ 1. Every fresh communion is a new point of contact with God in Christ through the working of the Eternal Spirit; each last communion means more than any of those which have gone before, as even in our association with a human friend new qualities and untried depths of familiar characteristics are revealed in each successive act of intercourse. Friendship is taken up day by day on a higher level than formerly, because of these new glimpses of the inner recesses of life which are caught from time to time as friends meet. And frequent repetition of the sacrament ought no more to impair its value, than frequent meetings the reality of friendship.

§ 2. Communion is only begun and not ended at the altar. It is something more than a touch for a moment. Grace is not the infusion of some mysterious spiritual property, which God having im-

* *Bp. Alexander.*

parted leaves the recipient to make use of by himself; grace is the gift of God's personal working in the life through the indwelling spirit. God never holds His faithful children one moment to let them go the next. He enfolds us in Himself with a tightening embrace, as by loyalty to His laws and repeated acts of faith, we expose new portions of our nature for Him to lay hold on. The sense of God's presence may be peculiarly full as we kneel to receive the heavenly food, just as at the moment of meeting again one whom we love the emotions are deeply stirred; but by virtue of yesterday's communion, God is as near at hand to-day as He was when we received the sacrament. The Holy Communion would fail in its purpose if it made the presence of our Lord a reality only for the time being, and did not more fully introduce men into the Divine presence as an abiding state. The fact of God's immanence in us requires this conclusion.

§ 3. The result of a faithful reception of the Holy Communion should be holiness in the common, everyday life, from which an incident, the family meal, is borrowed and transformed as the symbol and means by which all other incidents may be transformed. So great a mystery demands all the majesty of a liturgy and the accompaniment of

stately worship; and a dignified ritual attached to this representative, this common act of our human life, is most valuable as indicating the majesty of all that is commonplace when it is touched by God. Just as we consecrate certain times and seasons in order that all times and seasons may become holy, so in the sacraments God has taught us to consecrate the simplest acts of ordinary life — the bath and the meal — as typical of the potential sacredness of all acts, and as a means of sanctifying and ennobling them. So the Holy Communion touches alike private life and life in society, the life of recreation and the life of business, and unless it transfigures each of these departments of human experience it falls short of its purpose. Let the business man remember that he strains to see and touch the Most Holy at the altar that he may see and touch the Most Holy in the market; let the professional man and the man of letters, the day labourer and the scientist each in his sphere be carried from the vision of God in the Eucharist to the abiding fellowship with God in his special vocation. He who comes *from* God goes *to* God, whithersoever his steps may bear him. The presence of our Lord at the altar is special but not exclusive. It is not a lamp lighted for a moment

and then put out, but a light which will illuminate all life, and enable us to see at every turn the vision of omnipresent Love. It is one function of the sacraments to enhance, not to dim, the reality of God's immanence in all His works; to train us to perceive and apprehend that

Earth's crammed with heaven
And every common bush afire with God,—

a declaration which otherwise would be held to be but a poet's fickle fancy or a vague philosophical idea. Days are coming, if they are not already upon us, when in the midst of scientific progress and explanation in which men are prone to rest as final, the believer's ceaseless theme must be the Divine indwelling. And the strongest and most telling means of keeping alive this truth for ourselves and others is the sacramental system of the Church.

Thus far we have been thinking of the Godward aspect of the Holy Communion — fellowship with God in Christ. On its manward side it is fellowship with man in Christ. As it sustains us in Divine fellowship and lifts us continually into purer heights, so it assures us of our incorporation in the mystical Body of Christ, "which is the blessed company of all faithful people," and inspires us to deeper love.

Here again it is necessary to recall the original simple form of the sacrament, a form so simple that, as Bishop Westcott says somewhere, it is difficult in the earliest references to it to distinguish it from the ordinary family meal. The brethren gather around the common table and partake of the common loaf.* And the use of the one loving-cup from which all drink goes beyond the customs of ordinary family life. The Holy Communion, which is a social act, speaks of the transformation of social life.† Just as the constant sharing of food at one table is the pledge of loyal service to one another

* *Cf.* 1 *Cor. x*: 17.—"*We, who are many, are one loaf.*" *The one serious objection to the otherwise convenient custom of using unleavened bread in the shape of wafers is that the symbolism of the common loaf is lost, and the point of contact with common life is somewhat obscured.*

† *Our Church, by the title adopted, by the form of service used, by the spirit of her rubrics where they touch upon the subject, plainly declares it to be her intention that the Holy Communion should always be celebrated so as to be a social act. The priest is not a mere representative of the congregation, doing things* for *them, but a leader acting* with *them. For the priest to act without the congregation is only less anomalous than for the congregation to act without the priest. Not that the* whole *congregation present should necessarily receive at any given celebration of the Holy Communion, though in the judgment of the present writer the ideal would be reached only thus.*

on the part of all who partake, as well as a means of gaining strength to fulfil the pledge, so the Holy Communion is a pledge to mutual service and equipment for its accomplishment. "In Christ" a new relationship is established between man and man, or rather an old relationship is deepened and consummated. Brethren after the flesh are made brethren in the Lord.* Family and national ties are very sacred and very close, but they reach the full purpose which God designed for them only when they become the basis for spiritual kinship. It is considered a dreadful thing, and rightly so, when men of common blood are at variance with one another; nothing is more shameful than a family feud. And on the other hand, blood relationship is in itself a demand for the most loyal service that men are capable of rendering. Now through the sacramental life a kinship is established and sustained as real and as binding as that consequent upon the accident of birth; so that for Christian to be at variance with Christian is as unnatural as it is for two of one family to strive with one another; for Christian to overreach Christian is as treacherous as it was for Jacob to steal Esau's blessing. The loyalty which those who are "in Christ" owe one another is the loyalty

* *Cf. Philemon* 16.

due among those who sit at the same board and eat of the same loaf, among those in whose veins runs the blood of a common mother. When men learn the reality and force of spiritual kinship, social problems will be solved and social evils will cease.

But a hasty glance has been bestowed in the foregoing pages on a mystery of unsearchable depth, and many of its aspects have not even been noted. The more obvious aspects are the ones upon which stress has been laid as including in them all others. As with all other forms of approach to God, so here, what a man knows about the Holy Communion is that which God has taught him in his reception of the Sacrament. Those who would fain plumb its depths must come frequently and preparedly to the feast. Nor is preparation a formal act. It is unfortunate that some teachers make it so by laying insistence on a set form. The best, and indeed the only, true preparation is an outcome of a full knowledge of the thing for which we wish to prepare ourselves, just as the best thanksgiving for a blessing is the spontaneous utterance consequent upon a contemplation of the gift received. The man who knows the spiritual significance of the Holy Communion, *ipso facto* knows how to prepare to receive it.

Chapter xi

Witnesses unto the Uttermost Part of the Earth

THE breadth of the Christian's vision is exceeded only by its height, and his influence is coterminous with nothing less than the human fabric of which he is a part. By faith man penetrates into the heaven of heavens and reaches the very presence of God himself, a privilege and duty which belong not to a favoured few but to the race.

Too low they build, who build beneath the stars,

is a truth of universal application. But just as the stars must not limit man's vision as he gazes up, neither must the horizon limit his vision as he looks abroad. Christian energy is not doing its full work unless it aims at touching the uttermost part of the earth. That which is recorded in Acts 1 : 8 * tells of an abiding principle and not merely of a historic fact. Our Lord is speaking through that group of

* *Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

representative men who witnessed His Ascension, to all who become his followers. Not the Apostles alone but all Christians are destined to be His witnesses "unto the uttermost part of the earth." It is only to be expected that those who have the power to explore the secrets of the divine Being, will also have this lesser power of world-wide influence, which after all, great as it is, is infinitely less aspiring than the former. The same faith that enables us to love and serve our Lord in heaven, equips us to love and serve the men of the remote parts of the earth. To have the former is to be heir to the latter.

Men who imbibe this principle and make it part of themselves are said to have missionary spirit. But it cannot be too strongly insisted that this spirit is not something over and above the common Christian character; for it is not a possession which we are to claim simply because we are bidden to do so, spurred to it by the "very purity of the law of duty." The missionary spirit is inherent in Christianity. Even though Christ had never said, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations,"* even if He had not assured His followers that they were to be witnesses "unto the uttermost part of the earth," it would have made no practical differ-

* *St. Matt. xxviii*: 19.

ence in the final issue of Christian truth. The Church would have been missionary just the same —S. Paul, S. Augustine, S. Columba, S. Francis Xavier, would have striven for the Gospel's sake none the less boldly, none the less zealously. The missionary is not a missionary because of a few missionary texts in the Bible. He is a missionary because he is a Christian. All Christ's commands are invitations, which merely put into concise language what the heart already recognizes as its privilege and joy. The missionary commission* is the Church's charter, telling all men of her right to dare to make Christianity coterminous with humanity, arresting the attention of those to whom the missionary is sent rather than acting as the sole motive power of the missionary; from it we get definite authority, and so a measure of inspiration, but we do not rest upon it, as though it were by an arbitrary fiat of God that a Christian were converted into a missionary.† The latter term tells

* *St. Matt. xxviii:* 19, 20.

† *The following remarkable phrase occurs in S. Andrew's Devotions: —Who* [i. e., *Christ*] *hath manifested in every place the savour of His knowledge . . . by the incredible conversion of the world to the Faith, without assistance of authority, without intervention of persuasion.*

of one aspect of the Christian character, that is all. Whoever accepts Christ's Christianity — the redundancy is necessary — forthwith becomes a missionary.* Andrew needed no injunction to seek Peter; he did it because, being a follower of Christ, he could not help it. And if he had refrained, he would have ceased at that moment to be a disciple. Christians, whether considered individually or corporately, who are not missionary in desire and intention, are Christians only in name, getting little from and contributing nothing to the religion of the Incarnation. If the foregoing contention be true, the definition of "missionary" stands sadly in need of revision. A missionary is an honourable title not to be reserved only for those who work for God in the waste places of His vineyard, but the coveted possession of every Christian who strives to bear a wide witness, as well as deep, to Christ among men.

Missionary service is a *personal* thing; it cannot be deputed to another any more than it can have something else as a substitute for it. Contributing money in order that others may be maintained in their missionary undertakings, does not exempt

* *The Brotherhood of S. Andrew is nothing more than an organized effort to fulfil a common Christian duty.*

the donor from personal service himself. Every Christian is bound to strive to deepen and widen, by the force of his personality in Christ, the Kingdom of God. Of course there is a narrower and a wider missionary spirit. The latter is reached by faithfulness to the former, here as well as elsewhere effective breadth beginning in depth. All missionary power begins (as well as ends) in that unconscious witness* which the Christian character bears to Christ. So infectious a thing is God's truth, that to receive it is to spread it.

As one lamp lights another nor grows less,
So nobleness enkindleth nobleness.

"Ye *are* the light of the world;" "Ye *are* the salt of the earth." And it is that part of the character which easily, simply and naturally lays hold

* *Cf. Emerson's verses on unconscious influence:*

Little thinks, in the field, yon red cloaked clown,
Of thee from the hill-top looking down;
The heifer that lows in the upland farm,
Far-heard, lows not thine ear to charm;
The sexton, tolling his bell at noon,
Dreams not that great Napoleon
Stops his horse, and lists with delight,
While his files sweep round yon Alpine height;
Nor knowest thou what argument
Thy life to thy neighbour's creed has lent.

on Christ, that first sheds God's light abroad and becomes the preservative element of society.

It is further noticeable that the sphere of Christian influence as alluded to by our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount, corresponds with the sphere of witness-bearing marked out by Him in His parting words before the Ascension—"Ye are the light of *the world;*" "Ye are the salt of *the earth;*" "Ye shall be witnesses unto the uttermost part of the earth." To recognize the fact that the Christian life is the most invincible and the most permeating influence that the world can ever know, is an enormous incentive to consistency and zealous devotion. Christian character is the only force which a man can both leave behind him, and take with him when he comes to die. Nothing can withstand it, and nothing can check its career. It is bound to impress all that it touches, and it touches everything—"the world," "the earth."

It is not too much to hold that unconscious influence always exceeds conscious influence, the latter reaching the zenith of its effectiveness only when it has been transformed, by constant use, into the former. It is in the home that the Christian begins that witness-bearing, which is destined to reach so far.

But the widest missionary spirit is inclusive. It

is not a substitute for home work, any more than public life is a substitute for family life. The former is the extension of the latter. The disciples of the first days reached the uttermost part of the earth through Jerusalem and all Judæa and Samaria; while the disciples of these latter days must touch the bounds of the world through the parish, the diocese, the Church of the nation. Nothing, no matter how fine and striking it may be, can take the place of loyalty to the duties that are nearest at hand. Church life may be conceived of as a series of concentric circles, the innermost of which representing parochial relations, the next diocesan missions, then domestic, and the outermost circle foreign missions. Power to traverse the large circumference comes from faithfully treading the round of those that lie within, beginning with that next the centre. The only way to have power and to serve abroad is to live a deep full life at home, and, let it be added, the only way to have large power and to serve at home is to cast the eye far abroad and wind the interests of a whole world around the heart. And the spiritual force of the foreign mission field is no lying index of the spiritual condition of the home Church; it tells the tale as truly as the pulse reports for the heart. It may

be perfectly true of every other society of men that mere concentration is the secret of power, but it is not so with the Church. Any ecclesiastical unit, be it parish, diocese, province, or national Church, which is content to feed itself on rich spiritual food, without regard for the rest of the world, will sooner or later be filled with disease and die. However specious a form self-contemplation may assume, it inevitably ends in ruin, for it leads to isolation; and what is isolation but the most awful and irretrievable of catastrophes? The only true independence is that which is the fruit of interdependence. A given Church may have all the appearance of life—there may be popularity, large property, handsome equipment and other signs of outward prosperity—but within there is nothing but death. It is just as wrong and just as fatal to hold aloof, on any plea soever, from the common life of the entire Church at home and abroad, as it is to cut ourselves off from the Church of the past by a denial of fundamental truth. The former, quite as much as the latter, is a departure from Apostolic Christianity, and so merits the opprobrious name of schism.

It is a strange but inflexible spiritual law, that those who aim at anything short of the best according to

their conception, as God has given them light, will sooner or later come to grief. It is merely a matter of time. The hope of Christianity lies in its boldness. The Church is strong when she is daring, and only then; her strength rises and falls with her courage — victory is faith.* What an inspiration to every parish, the lowliest and poorest as well as the numerically strong and financially rich! — the uttermost part of the earth is within the reach of its influence: ay, more than that, is in need of its prayers and its labours. Work for foreign missions is the climax and crown of Christian life, not a sluggish tributary to it. And a parish will be in the vanguard of God's forces or far in the rear, according as it rises to its responsibility in this direction or not.

There is an immense amount of untutored missionary desire. That is to say, there are vast numbers of Christians whose hearts burn towards those who do not know Christ, but there is no man to teach them how to crystallize desire into prayer and action and let the stream of their desire run clear and full; there are many others, too, who have a narrow missionary spirit and who linger in Judæa and Samaria, only because they have never

* 1 *John* v: 4.

been shown how it is possible to reach unto the uttermost part of the earth. The fire is there, but it smoulders for want of fuel. Men need direction for their missionary aspirations; they need to be instructed in the work that is being done. We cannot expect people to be interested in what they know nothing about. If the cause of missions is presented as an abstraction, and men are urged to give "on principle," the gifts that come will be such as cost the givers nothing. And as for prayers — well, there will be none, for prayers cannot live on abstractions. The clergy should be the leaders in making the missions of the Church a living thing; and it is nothing short of a scandal that so many pulpits are closed to those who wear the title of "missionary." But whatever be the shortcomings of the clergy, there is no more reason why Christian laymen should be ignorant of the general features of Church work in the far West or in China and Japan than that they should be ignorant of international politics; and there is more reason for shame on account of ignorance in the former than in the latter case. Once waken men's interest in the work abroad as a concrete reality, and there will be stronger prayer, more numerous offers for personal service in foreign

work from the best and bravest, more liberal contributions in money.

It has already been hinted that not only does the uttermost part of the earth need Christianity, but that Christianity needs the uttermost part of the earth. We cannot fully know Christ until all the nations have seen and believed and told their vision. The Church of God is poor, in that it lacks the contribution which the un-Christianized nations alone can give by being evangelized. Just as the speculative East needed in the first days the practical West to balance its concept of the Gospel, and *vice versa*, so it is now. Before we can see the full glory of the Incarnation, representatives of all nations must blend their vision with that which has already been granted. Every separate stone must be set before the temple reaches its final splendour. Foreign missions are as much for the Church's sake as for the heathen's, as much for the eternal profit of those who are sent as for those to whom they go.

No attempt has been made in these pages to argue as with men who do not believe in the widest missionary enterprise, for missionary spirit is not created by argument. Indeed, many an objection is but the instrument by which persons convict them-

selves of being Christian only in name. There is no answer to what they say excepting, "Of course you cannot believe in missions, because it is evident you do not believe in Christ. To believe in Christ is to believe in missions, missions unto the uttermost part of the earth." It would be a shame to appear to apologize for what is of the essence of Christianity. So we turn away from all smaller reasoning, to the one great spring and impulse of mission work far and near. The Christian has to see those whom Christ sees, for the follower looks through his master's eyes; the Christian has to love and serve those whom Christ loves and serves, for the follower lives only in his master's spirit. Consequently, he must see, love and serve unto the uttermost part of the earth. Being a follower of Christ, he cannot help it; he does it for the same reason and with the same naturalness that the sun shines and the rose sheds its fragrance abroad.

Chapter xii

The Inspiration of Responsibility

THE responsibility of the sons of God has been the theme of this book, and the writer trusts that in dwelling upon the duties of the Christian life he has not failed to bring out something of its glory and inspiration. But the thing out of which we can gather the largest help to fulfil our responsibility is the responsibility itself. If God dwells high up on the hills of difficulty, He has a throne, too, in the heart of every claim made on human character.* The presence in our life of a difficulty is a call to responsibility, and the acceptance of a responsibility is the admittance into personal experience of God in His triumphant march toward the great consummation; it is correspondence with victory. Just as the glory of duty consists, not in its immediate issue, but in its performance, so the main inspiration for responsibility comes not from external goads and spurs, but from the very thing which lies at our

* *See Appendix.*

feet, looking at first sight like a task given to mock rather than inspire, to denude of what little power we have rather than to equip, to undo the would-be doer rather than to be done by him. Responsibility without doubt is a task, but much more is it an inspiration. Of course the measure of inspiration which it imparts is proportionate to the faith and courage with which it is approached. Responsibility handled with dilettante fingers will only cut and wound; grasped in firm embrace, it will bestow so much illumination and vigour that the pain which inaugurates the gift will be forgotten almost before the last ache has faded out. And again, it is not too much to say that the greater a responsibility is, the greater is its power to inspire. In other words, inspiration is always commensurate with responsibility. "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." In the common Christian duty, which has been outlined in the foregoing pages, so great is the responsibility imposed that nothing short of the highest conceivable incentive can carry a man through. And the inspiration lies within the task and will declare itself only in the doing of the task.

Even on the natural side man finds attraction and inspiration in problems, puzzles and difficulties.*

* *See Prof. William James in, Is Life Worth Living? "Too*

No sooner is one problem solved or one difficulty surmounted than another is eagerly sought for and grappled with. The spice of life lies in its antagonisms.* It is not the prospect of some reward of wealth or honour that carries men to the crown of their task; it is the joy of the doing, a joy that is felt even in those preliminary experimentations which only pave the way to the real undertaking. Men — we are not thinking of butterflies — cannot exist without difficulty. To be shorn of it means death, because inspiration is bound up with it, and inspiration is the breath of God, without the constant influx of which man ceases to be a living soul. Responsibility is the sacrament of inspiration. The miracles of Christ, whatever else they did, suggested new responsibility to the race, opened up a new field of daring and enlarged the

much questioning and too little active responsibility lead, almost as often as too much sensualism does, to the edge of the slope, at the bottom of which lie pessimism and the nightmare or suicidal view of life."

**See Dr. John Fiske in his recently published, Through Nature to God, where in a study of the Mystery of Evil, he developes this thought most admirably, though making the unnecessary deduction that God is the creator of moral evil.*

scope of human operations. They encouraged men to attempt the impossible; and without question the hidden but no less effective cause of all scientific development has been and is Christian aspiration, roused to its highest pitch by the marvels performed by the Man Christ Jesus. Christian faith has educated us to a belief that the first promise of order lies in the discovery of chaos, and that every problem carries in its own pocket a key formed to fit the hand of man. Thus interest in the sorrows and perplexities of the multitudes rises from a nerveless compassion that of yore worked laboriously with its "law-stiffened fingers," to a wide-reaching ministration of power; the secrets of nature become invitations to knowledge; and effort that was once merely instinctive and random becomes rational and triumphant.

But Christ enabled men to achieve what before they had only sighed after, not by releasing from, but on the contrary by adding to human responsibility. He saw the inspiration of responsibility, so by making the latter great He made the former reach its height; He equipped man to do the smaller duties of life by giving larger ones. It will for ever hold true that to bring men up to their best, we must call them to the highest. They are to be won,

not by the promise of a gift, but by a ringing call to duty, not by something to eat, but by something to do. One reason at least why Christianity is bound to supersede all other religions is because of the supreme largeness of its demands on human character and the supreme inspiration that those demands contain. The fault of most modern prophets is not that they present too high an ideal, but an ideal that is sketched with a faltering hand ; the appeal to self-sacrifice is too timid and imprecise, the challenge to courage is too low-voiced, with the result that the tide of inspiration ebbs low. The call to each soul to contribute its quota toward the realization of the most remote ideal so far from being depressing is stimulating, and a necessary goad to the promotion of individual as well as corporate development. Mr. Kipling's prophetic voice rings out above the Babel of a garrulous age and inspires men in the only way they can be inspired, by pointing out human responsibility and bidding men take up their burden.

Go to your work and be strong, halting not on your ways,
Balking the end half-won for an instant dole of praise.
Stand to your work and be wise, certain of sword and pen,
Who are neither children nor gods, but men in a world of men.

Clothed with the conviction that true inspiration lies in responsibility, what better words of inspiration can this closing chapter bear than what will come from a final insistence upon the vastness of the ordinary man's spiritual responsibility and the grandeur of his opportunity? In these days a true man rises instinctively to a broad outlook. He does not labour for his own self-fulfillment and nothing more. Of course, every act of self-sacrifice for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake helps toward that end, for self-sacrifice for the promotion of whatever cause is always the negative aspect of self-fulfillment. But Christians strive toward the best not from selfish motives, not merely because what God commands must be done, but because He has opened up to our gaze a vision of His world-purposes and shown us that obedience means coöperation with Him in their fulfillment. Thus small actions become big with import. Personal purity means a contribution toward the solution of the divorce question which exceeds in its constructive influence the most wisely worded canon of marriage. The commercial honour of the individual is the forging of a ward in the key that will some day unlock the closed door of the industrial problem. Faithfulness in spiritual duties in the

most circumscribed life is a voice that reaches the uttermost part of the earth and gives its undying witness to all who have ears to hear. Loyalty and charity working hand in hand in the Christian soul will do as much as the most carefully framed and comprehensive formula of agreement, to bring about that Christian unity for which our Lord prayed * when His time was short and His thoughts only upon that which was the objective point of the Incarnation.

Whether or not men recognize the extent of their influence, that influence tells. But what a source of inspiration and strength is lost when these things are hidden and one sees only the natural side of life, the prison-house of environment and the task without its incentive! The Architect of life would have His least workman know the full plan and not merely that of the small bit of it which is his special care. Once to discern our personal relation to God's world-purposes is to be for ever purged of dilettantism; is to be for ever emancipated from a certain religious littleness that shackles so many Christian feet, and to move out into a breadth which involves no loss of depth; is to shake non-essentials into the background, and bring funda-

* *St. John xvii.*

mental truths to the fore, where they can burn themselves into our very being; is to receive a new motive for living and doing.

Fired by a sense of large responsibility, sustained spiritual effort on a high plane becomes possible for each in his own little corner. The demand upon men to pray well, to seek to make the moral life blameless, and to deepen and enlarge the sphere of service,—in a word, to aspire to the stars and reach out to the four corners of the world, suggests privilege rather than hardship to the rank and file of the Christian army. The layman may not look to the priest as a vicarious man of prayer and of righteousness. The priesthood is representative, not exclusive, in character and service. The priest is a man of prayer not because he is a priest, but because he is a Christian, his priesthood but determining the accidental features of his devotional life. He is a holy man not because he is a priest, but because he is a Christian, his priesthood but determining the sphere in which his holiness is to be expressed. The priest does spiritual work not because he is a priest, but because he is a Christian, his priesthood but making him a leader in service, *primus inter pares*. Faithfulness in prayer, righteousness in life, full spiritual service, are the responsi-

bility as much of the layman as of the priest. Failure in any one of these departments of life is as culpable in the layman as in the priest. It is notable that of all the vows in the Ordinal, whether in the ordering of priest or deacon, or in the consecration of a bishop, the majority are but the expansion of common Christian duty and could be as well taken by layman as by cleric. The functional peculiarities are as few as the representative duties are many. The priestly life is mainly, though not solely, the intensification of fundamental relations with God and man, as the Ordinal testifies, and the ideal priesthood, so far as it touches devotion, morals and common service, is but the perpetual and living reminder to the laity of what they should be and do. There are many ready to decry sacerdotalism; but few of these have sufficient logic to recognize that the more completely the ministry is denuded of all but its representative character, the more fully is the layman weighted with spiritual responsibility.*

And spiritual work is as wide as human activity. The tendency to make religion a department of life instead of the Christian synonym for the whole of life, has given rise to such a redundancy as

* *See Moberly's Ministerial Priesthood, chap. ii.*

"applied Christianity." The life of common activities, social and industrial, is as truly the sphere of religion as the sanctuary. The natural is not the antithesis but the foundation of the spiritual. First that which is natural and afterward that which is spiritual — by transformation, not by substitution. The Resurrection of Christ is a parable as well as a fact. And it is for the layman, whether he be the thinker in his study or the labourer in his ditch, to exercise his priesthood in the sphere of his occupation, lifting to God for His transforming touch each transaction in which he is engaged, recognizing that all life is divine, and all business God's business. It is for the layman to enter into the bent of his age and train it to God, not holding aloof from popular movements and ambitions, but laying hold of them and labouring for their conversion and sanctification. Thus will the natural become the spiritual. The witness that the world of to-day is most in need of is that which will testify that if God is the God of the supernatural and extraordinary, just as really is He the God of the natural and ordinary, revealing Himself through and using common things as the general rule, turning to what is uncommon as the exception. Who can bear this witness so well as the layman in the home

and in the market? Certain it is that until this is done and theology has become much more than now part of the web and woof of common life among common men, theological assent or ecclesiastical unity will accomplish but little toward unifying life in Christ in any worthy sense.

This, then, is the ordinary duty of a Christian layman. It is not something optional, to be assumed or not as we prefer. It is what we must accept as our responsibility, if we accept Christ and look for acceptance in Him. The Church of to-day is coming to recognize this more and more, and is settling down to the work before her with wisdom and zeal. Even beneath the reaction against "organized Christianity," which has appeared of late, and partially explanatory of it, is moral earnestness, an earnestness that deprecates that conventional religion which, narrow in both its vision and methods, fails to touch life with a hand of power. Men of action wish a Christianity which is weighted with responsibilities. Here and there one finds a nerveless Amiel who can speak fine phrases, but who shrinks from responsibility. And here and there, too, is a doctrinaire philosopher or an idle onlooker who croaks of degeneration and declares that life lacks inspiration. But all the while the workers,

with eyes gleaming with hope, plunge into the most hopeless problems, and reap their inspiration from their toil.

Appendix

Where God Dwells †

THERE is no truth so thrilling as that which speaks of God's abiding presence, not merely *with* but *in* His creation, though He is neither limited by nor dependent upon it. Having created, He sustains, sustains from within, so that the most recent manifestation of energy, whether in the radiance of a sunrise or the smile on a child's face, is not the reflection of a far-off movement of God, but an indication of His present working. God is behind the world of things, controlling and using all that is visible, so that the voiceless speaks and the lifeless lives and imparts life. But His delight is among the sons of men. He dwells in men, making their bodies His temple and their souls His throne. He dwells in nature because He dwells in man, as well as dwelling in man because man is part of nature. What will help a man to honour his own body and to reverence the bodies of others,

† *The Bishop of Ripon, under the title of "Seeking and Find-*

more than the thought that the Spirit of God fills the human frame as light fills the room, leaving no part untouched? It is not sufficient to think of

ing," gives the following text and exquisite little poem as a Diocesan Motto for 1899:

Master, where dwellest Thou? — St. John i: 38.

THE QUEST

O Master of my soul, where dwellest Thou?
For but one Sovereign doth love allow,
And if I find not Thee, quite lost am I;
Tell me Thy dwelling place: this is my cry.

No travel will I shrink, no danger dread,
If to Thy home, where'er it be, I may be led:
Not where the world displays its golden pride,
Only with Him, Who is the King, would I abide.

THE FINDING

Nay, not in far distant lands, but ever near,
Near as the heart that hopes or beats with fear;
My Home is in the heaven, and yet I dwell
With every human heart that loveth well.

Not where proud perils are I place My throne,
But with the true of heart, and these alone;
So where the contrite soul breathes a true sigh,
And where kind deeds are done, even there dwell I.

And those who live by love need never ask,
They find my dwelling place in every task;
Vainly they seek who all impatient roam;
If brave and good thy heart, there is My home.

God as being in some organ of the body — the most worthy part, such as the heart or the brain. God's Spirit fills His temple with His glory and His power, making the least comely parts noble. He sanctifies each member in the fulfillment of its proper function. To misuse or abuse any power or faculty, is to drive the Spirit of God from His chosen resting-place; whereas to surrender the members of the body and the faculties of the soul to His influence, is to lift up the whole man into increasing glory and beauty.

But it is not difficult to accept the truth that God lives within His wonderful creation. The earliest dawn of religion perceived Him in His works of beauty and majesty, — the sun, the stars, the river, the tempest. And if He is immanent in that which is less, it is only logic to say that He must of necessity be in that which is greater — if in the world of things, much more then in the world of men, in the individual and in society. But so deep is man's instinctive reverence, so abiding his sense of unworthiness, that it needed the Incarnation to convince man that he was destined to become the heaven of God. Yes, the heaven of God, for heaven is where God is rather than God where heaven is.

All this has become an elementary truth of reli-

gion. Only it has to be expressed in new terms from time to time. The thought has to be recoined as the edges of language wear smooth, that its force and value may be recognized. The immanence of God, as thus considered, is not difficult for men to accept, unless indeed they wander into the barren wastes of a deistic thought, which banishes God from life as we know it, and makes Him a transcendent unreality.

What *does* stagger men is the existence in a world in which God dwells, of the dark mysteries from which none can escape,—the disastrous storms, the difficulties, the pains of life. If, they argue, God dwells in the world, why does He not sweep away these heavy shadows, this over-much grief? There is only one answer, and it is this: God does not annihilate these things because He has a high use for them; He cannot destroy that which He can inhabit; God dwells in the dark places, in the wilderness, in the storms; He has taken possession of them, and they are His just as much as the sunshine and the fertile land. In short, God dwells in everything short of sin, even in the fiercest, gloomiest penalty of sin. The angel of vengeance is the angel of God's blessing for all penitents who will accept him as such.

When our Lord came in the flesh, He entered into every human experience to abide in it all the days. He invested temptation, so that temptation is henceforth man's highest opportunity. He seized upon difficulty, and behold, it becomes a revelation. He invested responsibility till it became inspiration, duty till it became privilege. He wrapped Himself in sorrow, and sorrow is turned into joy. He explored the darkest recesses of death, and death is the gate to life immortal. And these transformations are for all time.

It is a process of transformation, let it be noted, which these mysteries undergo. It is not that the temptation in time is swept away and an opportunity substituted in its place; but the temptation *becomes* an opportunity, and man mounts upon it to a higher level of self-sacrifice, or purity or honour. It is not that the difficulty is burned up by God's fire and a revelation comes gliding in as a sunbeam athwart the ashes of the difficulty; but the difficulty itself becomes the revelation. The pain of Rebekah in child-birth as the children struggled in her womb, made her inquire of the Lord, and God flashed back the reply from the heart of her difficulty: "Two nations are in thy womb." Joseph brooded over the condition of

Mary, his espoused wife, until, in the night vision, the angel of the Lord appeared, and said: "That Which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." His difficulty became a revelation. Similarly the dominant feature of responsibility becomes not its weight but its inspiration, of duty not its 'ought' but its 'may.' And so it is with sickness, and sorrow, and death. S. Paul's sickness, whether it was a malady of the eyes or Asiatic malaria is of little consequence, became to him spiritual health and power; "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness." As for sorrow, it is turned into joy,—the very thing that caused tears becoming the spring of smiles. And death, the king of shadows, is shorn of its horrors and becomes the entrance chamber to introduce into the presence of the King of Light.

The Bible is full of phrases (in the Old Testament, of course, they are prophetic, pointing to Messianic days) that tell of God's transforming power. Darkness shall be turned into light; the desert shall blossom as a rose; the barren shall be a mother of children; the glowing sand shall become a pool; and the thirsty ground, springs of water; the deaf shall hear, and the blind see; defeat becomes victory; and the instrument of shame and

torture, the symbol of glory and joy. And all this, which, through the Incarnation, has become a fact in common life, is a revelation of God's power, not to say love, which far exceeds in wonder whatever we knew before. It is appalling to think of a power so strong that it can annihilate with the irresistible force of its grinding heel; but it is inspiring to consider an Almightiness that transforms the works of evil into the hand-maidens of righteousness and converts the sinner into the saint. And it is this latter power which eternal Love possesses and exhibits. He persistently dwells in the sinner until the sinner wakes up in His likeness and is satisfied with it; He enters into the shadows and holds them until they become first as the morning clouds fingered by the earliest rays of the rising sun, and eventually as the brightness of the noon-day light.

But men must not accept this as a mere poetic fancy, beautiful but not of practical value. It is nothing, if not a source of power. We must experiment with our own difficulties, sickness, sorrows — yes, and our own death. There are those, Christian scientists and others, that espouse a false idealism, who meet the grim realities of life with a courage that is born of a lie. They deny the existence of everything they do not like, saying that

sorrow and sin and death are not, that they are phantoms. They are not unlike the silly bird, which, finding itself hard pressed, buries its head in the nearest bush, and being unable to see its pursuers, deceives itself into thinking that it is not pursued. But "things and actions are what they are," so why should we desire to deceive ourselves? The Christian's course of action is to say that these dark mysteries are real, but the Spirit of God in us will enable us to find the Spirit of God in them.

Our Lord on the Mount of the Transfiguration, and later on in the Passion, tells the whole story. Calmly contemplating His own approaching death, which He had just foretold, and bringing it before the Father in prayer, He sees the transfiguration of the king of terrors, and, in a blaze of spiritual exaltation, speaks of His own decease so soon to be accomplished. Then afterward in the Garden of Gethsemane, on the way of sorrow, and upon the Cross, He was in every detail the victor. These final experiences of life did not seize upon Him; it was He who seized them; He wrung them dry of all that they had to give and for ever changed their character. Frowning monarchs they can never be to the followers of our Lord, but, on the contrary, powerful servants. Christ's victory was not in the

Resurrection any more completely than in the Passion. It was in the former because it had been in the latter. Good desires brought to good effect, as the Easter Collect puts it, end in the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. Victory is not only a thing of to-morrow; it belongs to to-day. The Christian's life is victory all along the line.

Let men, then, take their own hard, grim, specific pain or difficulty, and face it fearlessly and expectantly, and they will find that the "worst turns the best to the brave." Let them throw their arms about it, and say with Jacob: "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me." And, lo! they will find that their arms are about God and His about them. If we pray God to sanctify our sickness, it is not that we expect Him to touch it from without. No, we look for more than that, much more. We expect Him to reveal Himself out of the depths of the suffering, so that the more earnestly we look at it the more clearly shall we see Him and His Face of Love. Men who have done this with the lesser of the dark mysteries will be quite ready when the time comes to act in the same way toward death, and say triumphantly: "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory."

What is true of personal difficulties, perplexities

and sorrows, is equally true of the sorrows of a world. Let men remember that those who hold back timidly or discouraged from hand-to-hand conflict with social, political and industrial difficulties, are forfeiting their share in the largest kind of revelation. God dwells there, in corporate sorrows, as well as in those of the individual experience, and, if one may say so, in a fuller measure. The world needs brave men to-day, men who are determined to see God wherever He is, and He is in everything, everything short of actual sin. There is no philosophy so false to facts as pessimism, except perhaps cheap and unthinking optimism. It is only the Christian philosophy that is equal to the situation, a philosophy which ignores nothing, howsoever gruesome, but which sees God master of His world, and nowhere in such complete possession as in its darkest corners.

When God's storms come sweeping along, it is the Christian alone who can lift his head, look up, and stand erect as they enshroud him, for a Christian cannot fear where God is. Elijah could not find God in the storm that swept by him. But the youngest Christian can do what the stern prophet of old could not; he can find God in all storms, for all storms are God's.

LAUS DEO

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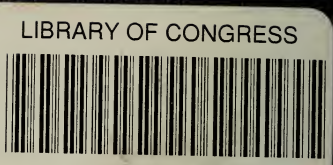
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